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THE MEN WHOM JESUS MADE

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THE MEN WHOM JESUS MADE

A SERIES OF STUDIES IN THE CHARACTERS OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

BY THE REV.

W. MACKINTOSH MACKAY, D.D.

SHERBROOKE CHURCH, GLASGOW

RICHARD R. SMITH, INC.
NEW YORK
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THE MEN WHOM JESUS MADE
Printed in the United States of America
The Branwell Press, New York

INTRODUCTORY

THIS brief study of the Apostles of our Lord has been undertaken at the request of the Author's American readers, whose kind appreciation of his former works he gratefully acknowledges. What little claim it makes to originality of treatment is indicated by its title. It is an analysis of the characters of the Twelve as ‘the men whom Jesus made.’ Of course the pioneer in this line is the late Professor A. B. Bruce, whose *Training of the Twelve* is a monumental book, and one to which he is deeply indebted. Here, however, the aim is not so much to show ‘the disciples under discipline for the Apostleship,’ as to deal with the individual product, and, by comparing the raw material the Master had to deal with in each case with the finished result He achieved by His teaching and influence, to set forth Christ as the Maker of Man. Of course in some cases the records are too scanty to do more than suggest a hypothesis; but in the majority a definite psychological development can be traced, which is full of interest and rich in practical application; and the Author trusts it may be found of value to students and teachers of the Life of Lives.

The Author desires to express his indebtedness to the Rev. John McColl, M.A., for kind assistance in revising the proofs.

GLASGOW, *August* 15, 1924.

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I

THE MEN WHOM JESUS MADE

'And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you.'—St. Matthew iv. 19.

There used to be a phrase, popular twenty or thirty years ago—'self-made men.' Perhaps it has fallen a little out of fashion to-day, because the article it indicates is not always so attractive in the wear as it looks in the shop window. 'My quarrel with self-made men,' says one, 'is not that they have made themselves; but that they have done the business so badly.' It was not the lack of culture this critic objected to. It was their assumptiveness and arrogance; their assumption that money was the be-all and end-all of existence, and their belief that they were entitled to the universal reverence of mankind, because they had been able to make it.

You have all read the 'Letters of a Self-made Man.' It is the very apotheosis of this spirit, and what struck me most of all in reading it, was not the shrewd wisdom of the father who wrote these letters, but the modesty and self-restraint of the son who had to read them, that he could endure such hectoring and intolerable superiority through three hundred pages of condescension. He must have been a remarkable boy. We don't breed many such on this side.

No, the self-made man has many good points about him, shrewdness and determination, and all that; but unless there is something more than self in his making he is a very objectionable customer, and one for whom the world is showing more and more that it has little use. But there is a type of man that never goes out of fashion. It is the Christ-made man. The type of man who does not necessarily enrich himself; but who enriches the world. This is the type of man, of which 'the glorious company of the Apostles' forms Christ's first examples. Let us look at them as they shine out from the Gospel story; for, though few in number, they are very wide in their variety. They are typical of the various kinds and classes of men Christ calls to His Kingdom still; and in their gifts and defects we learn valuable lessons of the gifts Christ can use, and of the defects He can rectify, in making men of the noblest kind out of the humblest and in some cases most unpromising materials.

Our subject, then, is *the men whom Jesus made*, and in this first chapter I want to dwell on the reasons why Jesus selected these men for His special treatment; the kind of men they were, and the success He achieved by His selection.

I. What was the purpose Jesus had in selecting the Twelve? The evangelist Mark puts his finger on the first reason when he says, '*He appointed twelve that they might be with him.*' There is something almost pathetic in these words.

Jesus chose these men 'that they might be with him.' He wanted friends, He wanted fellowship. He was alone in a world of growing hostility. We see how much He yearned for their sympathy in Gethsemane. 'Tarry ye here and watch with me.' It was for this reason that He called them first, that 'they might be with him.'

It cannot be said that these disciples perfectly fulfilled this function. We know how weak and obtuse they often were. Yet it would be easy to exaggerate their failure in this respect. Nor is it any compliment to the insight of Him who chose them to do so. In point of fact, these men showed a noble loyalty to their Master in following Him at all, and in the way they persevered in that following afterwards. It was in no empty boast that Peter could say, 'Master, we have left all and followed thee.' Theirs was a hard service. Whatever they hoped to get afterwards, there was little but hostility at the first. The Pharisees had already taken counsel to destroy Him when they left all to follow Him. Theirs was no worshipping of the rising sun, when they dared to be known as the friends of the Nazarene.

Christ valued their loyalty most highly. At the close He said to them, 'Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom.' Have you ever dared to be unpopular for Christ or conscience? Then you can afford to judge the cowardice of the Twelve at the last. Till then, think of their noble heroism, as at the call by the lake shore they

> 'Turned from home and toil and kindred,
> Leaving all for His dear sake.'

But the great reason which moved our Lord in His choice of the Twelve was of course *to carry on His work when He was gone.* 'Follow me and I will make you—*fishers of men.*'

I was speaking to a minister lately about a book which he had published. It was not a great work ; but it was a useful one, and I said to him, ‘ What did it cost you ? Sixty pounds ? ’ ‘ More than that,’ he replied ; ‘ but it will be a memorial to my people of my teaching when I am gone.’ ‘ A man’s thoughts,’ says Herbert Spencer, ‘ are like children born to him : he will not willingly let them die.’ Christ wrote no books to embalm His thoughts, and yet they were more worthy to live than ten thousand books. And they have lived. How ? He did not write on paper. No ; He wrote on the tablets of human hearts. That parchment seems frail, and yet after all it is the only durable substance in the world. What, after all, is the use of writing a top-shelf book ? After a generation it is only dust in ‘ the cemetery of books.’ But if you can write in the heart of man, then you have indeed raised ‘ a monument more lasting than brass.’

This was Christ’s chief reason in His choice of the Twelve. They were to be His witnesses. He would perish ; but the Word written in their hearts would remain. They were to be His torch-bearers to carry on the fire to others. He was the divine Prometheus who must die in bringing the fire down to earth.

Hence the pains Christ took in teaching these men. Professor Bruce's *Training of the Twelve,* one of the permanent books of sacred literature, shows how much time He spent upon them. By far the greatest amount of His teaching was given to this audience of Twelve. History proves it was not wasted. The crowds melted. The disciples alone remained—remained to be the founders of the greatest movement history has ever known The letters and words He wrote on the frail hearts of a Peter and a John became the imperishable possession of the human race.

II. Let us now look at *the character and qualifications* of these men He thus made His witnesses. Their number is small, but it is significant. It was twelve, not ten or twenty, and the number has doubtless a reference to the twelve tribes of Israel. It was meant to indicate that Christ was instituting a new kingdom, to take the place of the old that was about to pass away—the Kingdom of God. It was part of Christ's Messianic claim, an evidence of the remarkable Messianic Consciousness which inspired the Carpenter of Nazareth from the very outset of His mission.

So far as outward qualifications were concerned, they were poor and illiterate. Most of them were fishermen. One was a tax-gatherer, the most despised of all Jewish callings. Not one of them belonged to the intellectual class, the Scribes or Pharisees. Not one was well-to-do, unless perhaps John and James, the sons of Zebedee. Why did Jesus thus choose the poor and despised to confound the things that were mighty? Was it to teach men that God can use the feeblest instruments to effect His purpose, so that no flesh should glory in His presence?

There may have been that in it; but

the thought must not be pressed too far; for we do find in later days rich men like Barnabas, and cultured men like Saul of Tarsus, coming forward to be leaders in His Church. No, the reason was this, that, as Professor Bruce says, 'they were the best to be had.' The rich would not come. He had to work with the materials that lay to His hand. Then as now wealth was a barrier not impassable but serious to the acceptance of the Gospel. Then as now it was 'easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.'

Are you unsuccessful in life's race? Thank God for it. You are not far from the Kingdom of God. 'Heaven,' says Emerson, 'is built out of the dreams of the poor.' Are you a Midas? Does all you touch turn to gold? Then beware of it. The 'men that Jesus makes' are not usually money-making men. They are men who are poor in this world, but rich in faith. It is better to be 'God's fool' than the world's wise man.

Though few in number and poor in outward wealth, these men display *a rich variety of character.* As one has said, ‘the whole human race seemed to be represented in that narrow circle. There is Peter the impulsive man of action, and John the quiet man of thought. There is Andrew the eager home missionary, and Thomas the desponding doubter. There is Matthew the Roman tax-gatherer, the representative of foreign tyranny, and Simon the Zealot, the fiery patriot, to whom Rome is anathema. There is Nathanael the Israelite in whom is no guile, and Judas Iscariot who is all guile.’

What a mixture they are! It is a wonderful testimony to the universality of Christ that He attracted men of so different types. It was a prophecy of the future. ‘I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.’ The cultured and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the sinful and the innocent, children pure as the snow, and Magdalenes like that snow when it has been stamped in mire of city streets, all found something in Jesus—and find it still. He is the universal Saviour. He has a message for every one. He has a meaning for all life's riddles. There is not an experience represented in any congregation of suffering sinning men that cannot be interpreted by Him. He speaks with a language that can be understood by the whole human race. On His Cross 'there was an inscription in Greek and Latin and Hebrew.'

III. In closing let us add a word *on the success Jesus achieved in the making of these men.*

'Follow me and I will make you'—into what? Make you rich? No, not that. Make you cultured? No, not necessarily that. 'Make you to become fishers of men.' The truly Christ-made man is a man who is a saviour of his fellow-men. The crown of manhood, according to Christ, is service, the service of man. 'Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

This purpose they gloriously fulfilled. After a three years' curriculum in the college of Jesus, they went forth equipped with such power that men who had known their antecedents were amazed, and 'took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.'

Now we learn two things from that fact. First, that *every true Apostle must be first a disciple.* We sometimes hear it said that because the Apostles were illiterate, therefore Christ's ministers need not be educated. I remember once standing waiting on a Clyde ferry-boat at Glasgow. I was a student at the University then, and wore the red scarlet cloak which the students had to wear. The old ferryman looked at me and said: 'You 're a student. What are you going to be?' 'A minister,' I replied. 'A minister?' said he, 'you don't need to go to College for that. The Apostles were never at College, and they were better ministers than the most about here.' 'Never at College?' said I. 'They were three years there, and studied under the best of all professors, Jesus Christ.' The old man was silent. Raw student as I was, he felt I had answered him. The lesson, however, is wider. To do any real work for Christ, you must first be a learner at His feet. Some young converts are full of enthusiasm, but they forget 'the training of the Twelve.' To be a vessel fit for the Master's use you must first be a Christ-made man. The apostle must first be a disciple.

But then, secondly, *the true disciple should end in being an apostle.* Apostle means just a *sent-man.* Christ chose men to be with Him; but also that He might send them from Him. 'As the Father hath sent me, so have I sent you.' He, the great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, calls us to be Apostles, sent forth to be the saviours of our fellows.

Do we all realise this as we ought? Alas! Is not this the great want of our

Church to-day that so few disciples realise that they are called to be apostles. We read of the early disciples, that they ‘went everywhere, preaching the Word.’ We need not all be preachers, though I do think we might have more of them. One of the greatest needs of the Church to-day is young men of good position and education, who are willing to consecrate themselves to the Christian ministry, who are not afraid to turn aside from the lure of wealth and power to be followers of Christ and His Apostles, and give their life to seek and to save their fellow-men instead of seeking only to save themselves.

But whether Christ calls you to be a minister or not, He calls you to be a sent-man, to go forth in His spirit to be of service to your fellow-men, and if you do He promises you the same reward as He promised of old to the Twelve. ‘Ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on his throne, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’ Has not that promise been fulfilled even from a human point of view? Where are the nets and boats of Galilee to-day, which the disciples forsook for Christ? Gone for ever. As fleeting as the bright glitter of the fish they had caught as they lay dying on the Galilean beach. But the life they had found in following Christ was everlasting. They had literally found a kingdom, a kingdom which remains; which is offered to us still to-day, the kingdom of a noble character, an eternal influence, an enduring name.

Some years ago I was standing beneath the glorious dome of St. Mark's, Venice. That church is frescoed round with splendid pictures of the Twelve Apostles, and beneath them are inscribed in Latin the words 'The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee.' It was evening, and as I stood and looked at the beautiful church, the choir began their Evensong. Among other things they sang the *Te Deum*. When they came to these solemn words, I looked at the splendid effigies of the Apostles all around. I thought on all they had done, and I could not but feel how true these words were. Were they not glorious ? Yes, surely. The sacrifice they made seemed doubtless great to them that day, when first they left all and followed Jesus. But He has made it up to them a hundredfold. And He will do the same for you. ‘ There is no man who has left houses or lands for my sake but shall receive in this world a hundredfold, and in the world to come eternal life.’

II

THE MAN WHO BECAME A ROCK

'Thou are Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.'—St. John i. 42.

Of all 'the men whom Jesus made' Simon Peter is the one we know the best, and love the most. His very faults endear him to us, for there is a humanness about them which brings him all the closer to us; and the grand success which his character attained under the influence of Jesus teaches us what we may become under the same leadership. Christ's influence on Peter is indeed the very triumph of His work as a maker of men. As Dr. Stalker has said, 'He managed the tumultuous and fluctuating elements of his character as a perfect rider does a high-mettled horse. He transformed a nature as unstable as water into the consistency of a rock ; and on this rock He built the Church of the New Testament.'[1]

The words with which Jesus greeted him at His first meeting with the Apostle are prophetic of the noble development which was to take place in Peter, under the training of the Master. 'Thou art Simon the son of Jona : thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.' The word 'Jona' means literally a dove, and perhaps there is a reference in Christ's mention of it to the weakness and softness which lay beneath Peter's apparent strength. 'Thou art the son of a dove, but in My hands thou shalt become the man of rock !' At all events, that is what Peter became in the hands of Christ ; and what He did with him He can do with us all. He can transform the weakest of us all into 'the consistency of a rock.'

In analysing and exhibiting in a unity the character of Peter, I have found a considerable difficulty, by reason of the very wealth and complexity of the material which is presented to us in the Gospels. There is no man of whom we know more, with the exception of Jesus Himself, than Peter. His character is broadcasted over the whole record. But this very wealth of material makes it more difficult to gather it within the limits of a lecture. In unifying it I have thought it better to look first of all at *Peter's Natural Gifts*; then, secondly, at *his Temperamental Defects*; and, in the third place, at *his Acquired Graces*.

---

[1] *Imago Christi.* Chapter on 'Christ as a Teacher.'

I. And first of all let us look at *Peter's Natural Gifts*.

(*a*) Among these I would notice first of all *his gift of Leadership*. He was a born leader of men. There are some men who have this quality by nature. Set a dozen men in a desert island without any official head, and you will soon find one or two come to the front; like 'John Silver' in Stevenson's romance they assume naturally the command of the company. No matter what 'John Silver' may be; though he may be physically incapacitated in the most serious way, though he may be a quite uneducated, nay, a vicious man, he has that quality of leadership which inevitably sets him at the head of the band. He is born to lead.

Now it was so with Peter. There was no need for Peter to seek a pre-eminence, as the mother of Zebedee's children did for her sons. He won that by the natural gift of his personality. Whatever we may think of his official primacy, and Paul evidently knew nothing of his infallibility at Antioch, there is no doubt about his natural primacy. He is the obvious leader of the band from the beginning of the Gospels, and he holds it to the end. 'I go a-fishing,' he says to the listless, dismembered company at the last tryst on the shores of Galilee's lake; and they reply, 'We also go with thee.' It is a characteristic word. Peter is the unquestioned leader, now that Jesus is gone. He is the rock of the New Testament Church.

(*b*) This gift he had, because of two great qualities which lie at the root of leadership, the qualities of *Initiative* and *Courage*. Peter was a great Initiator. While others were thinking what must be done, Peter was ready with his word or action. The word sprang to his lips as quick as the flash upon the water when the sunbeam has touched it, and often as beautiful. So was it, when Jesus said to the disciples sadly, ‘ Will ye also go away ? ’ and the answer came as quick as it was comforting, ‘ Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life.’ And still more grandly was it illustrated in his confession at Cæsarea Philippi. ‘ Whom say ye that I am ? ’ Then said Peter, ‘ Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.’

This quality of initiative is a most precious gift, and should be cultivated by us all. For though it is a gift, it can be in some measure at least induced by education. A lady missionary told me that one of the things the negroes most wanted was this of initiative. They had no power to originate anything new. They were just like sheep to be led anywhere. But when she went to America, she found that the negroes there, in the quick atmosphere of the land of inventions, had become entirely changed, and were as ready in devising new expedients as before they were obtuse. Let us never get into the habit of accepting any situation as impossible. Let us never sit down in despair before a blank wall. Let us always believe there is a way round; and we, too, shall gain this most precious gift of life, the gift of initiative.

(*c*) But to be a leader we need not only Initiative, we need also *Courage* to take the initiative; and to press forward in it in the face of risks and opposition. And this *Courage* was a great, perhaps the most outstanding, quality of Peter. We see it all through his life. It comes out at the very first, when he had courage to make the great surrender on the shores of Galilee's lake. It was not all self-righteousness that made him say long after, 'Lord, we have left all and followed thee.' It was a big leap Peter took that day, when he left his livelihood and his home, and his wife, and probably little children to follow Jesus. Yes, it was courage that made him take that step; the greatest of all courage, moral courage.

And all down his life after that we see the same quality coming out. We see it in the storm on the lake, where he adventures his life on the water to come to Jesus; we see it when he drew his sword in the garden and smote off Malchus's ear; but most of all we see it after the Resurrection when he faced the fanatical fury of Jerusalem, and preached a crucified Messiah. 'Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of Life whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.' That was plain speaking, and we are not surprised that when the multitudes saw this plain fisherman talking thus to them, the *literati* and rulers of Judaism, they were astonished, and 'took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.'

And no doubt that was part of it, yea the chief part, but not the whole. For while it was the Spirit of Jesus that gave this erstwhile rather cowardly disciple the splendid courage of Pentecost, He did not so empower the rest. The Spirit of God can only work with the materials He finds there, and the fact that He made Peter the bold Demosthenes of the early Church is due to the fact that He had materials to work upon, the materials of a rare courage and a splendid initiative.

Courage! It is the one essential of a leader of men. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was once asked the essential of a statesman. After a moment's thought he said, 'Courage.' Yes; and not of a statesman only. 'The effeminate shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.' If you would reach any greatness in life you must have courage, you must take risks. Life is a great adventure, and the man who would win it must be ready to face what is round the corner, and not be afraid to play the man.

II. So far we have spoken of the good qualities of Peter, and were these the only things we should have to speak of, we should not wonder that Jesus called him as He did, or that he should afterwards have become the foundation stone of the early Church. But, unfortunately, we see in Peter not merely Initiative and Courage of no ordinary kind, we see also serious defects that go far to neutralise all that is good, and may, without the stiffening and restraining influence of a Higher Power, lead him as it has led many to be no blessing to themselves, but rather a curse and a scourge to humanity.

(*a*) One of these defects is *Impulsiveness*—an impulsiveness so marked that it leads to hastiness of action and rashness of speech. What is Impulsiveness? Psychologically we may define it *as action motived rather by feeling than by reason.* Of course, reason and feeling are present in every action; but in some men reason or reflection predominates over feeling; while in others emotion sways the reason.

Now the latter was true of Peter in a marked degree—a most dangerous quality in a leader of men. For while feelings may be good, and in Peter's case were usually good, they are notoriously variable and inconstant. Their goodness is 'like the early cloud which vanisheth away.' You see that coming out in Peter's life again and again. Perhaps most strikingly of all is it seen in the story of Christ's walking on the sea. When first he descries Christ coming stalking over the waves like a death-wraith to warn them of coming dissolution, he is transfixed with terror, and cries out for fear. Then when he recognises the Master his feelings pendulate to the opposite extreme, and he covets the same gift as his Master. Yet no sooner is this prayer granted than, beholding the waves dancing around him, his courage oozes out at every pore, and he cries out, ‘Lord, save me, I perish.’

The story of the foot-washing affords another example of the same mercurial quality of temperament. First he cries out in reverence, ‘Thou shalt never wash my feet!’ Anon he rushes to the other extreme. ‘Not my feet only; but also my hands and my head.’

Most tragically of all we see it in his boastful confidence on the dark betrayal night. ‘Lord, though all be offended in thee, yet will not I,’ yet he followed the words by the shameful denial an hour later, with the curses of a recreant smiting the dark night.

(*b*) And this brings us to the second of Peter’s defects, the *Inconstancy* of the man. Peter was courageous on occasions, but this courage of his could not be relied on. It tended to break down when the first flow of feeling which gave it expression was past. We see this coming out even after the Resurrection. We see it, for example, in his yielding to the Circumcision Party at Antioch when Paul had to withstand him ‘ to the face.’ One would have thought that after the conversion of Cornelius and the bold stand he made on that occasion, and after the Council of Jerusalem and the splendid speech he made then, Peter would have been firm as a rock on this question. But when the Judaists arrived at Antioch, all his old courage on this question seems to have forsaken him. ‘ He withdrew and separated himself from the Gentiles, fearing them of the Circumcision.’ Thus again and again his courage breaks down before opposition. It is a serious defect in a leader, and may lead its possessor, as it nearly did the Apostle, to a hopeless catastrophe at the end.

(*c*) Then once more among the natural defects of Peter’s personality we must regretfully note *his Over-weening Pride and Self-confidence*. There is something almost boyish in his self-satisfaction as he says to Jesus, 'Lord, we have left all and followed thee: what shall we have therefore?' But that self-righteousness took a much more offensive form, when it emboldened him to rebuke the Master, and to tell Him that the Cross was no destiny for Him. That act of presumption was rebuked by Christ in the strongest and most severe words He ever used to an Apostle, 'Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art an offence unto me.' And it was this pride which at the last led him to the terrible fall to which I have already referred: 'And he began to curse and to swear, saying, "I know not the man."' O what a fall was there! Hell was let loose on Peter's soul in that hour. The morning stars of Hell must have sung for joy that night and said, 'Thou art become one of us.'

Yes; and yet it was just out of that fall that Peter's rise was most truly begun. It was when he fell the lowest that that spiritual pride which is one of the worst diseases of his soul was finally arrested, and there began that slow, painful ascent into spiritual health which we see afterwards so beautifully manifested when he tells his converts to be 'clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.'

'He went out and wept bitterly.' Oh! these bitter tears of Peter! How poignant they were, and yet how healing! True are the words of Hooker regarding them: 'I am not afraid to affirm that puffed-up men are often assisted by God's grace, when by His grace they are not assisted; but are permitted and that grievously to transgress. Ask the soul of Peter, and it shall undoubtedly make you this answer: "These crystal tears wherein my sin and my weakness were bewailed have proved my endless joy. My strength hath been my ruin; but my fall hath been my stay."'

III. And this brings me to speak, lastly, of *the Acquired Graces of Peter's Character*, those qualities which were induced, or at least greatly developed, by his association with Christ, and which in the end made him the Man of Rock.

(*a*) And the first of these is *his deep sense of sin.*

If he fell and fell deeply, so deeply that at one time it seemed as if there were to be two Judases in the band, yet he always followed that by a repentance deeper still, washing away the mire of his soul in a fountain of tears. This tenderness of conscience is seen in him at the very first. And its source is manifest the same moment: 'Depart from me,' he cries, 'for I am a sinful man, *O Lord*.' The sense of sin may be induced from two sources. It may come from 'a vision of sin,' as Tennyson suggests in his great poem. That is a real way to touch a man's conscience to show him what sin is, by a vision of its awful results in the ruin it makes of soul and body.

But there is at once a higher and deeper way of inducing the sense of sin—the vision of Christ. There are some men of whom it may be said that when you are in their company, you feel a painful sense of your own deficiency. As you come in contact with the moral beauty of their souls, you realise how different you are, and how much you long to be wise and pure like them now. It was that Peter felt in the presence of Jesus. As he looked at the pure beauty of that life of love, his whole soul was pierced with self-contempt. 'Depart from me,' he cries, 'for I am a sinful man, *O Lord*.'

(*b*) And yet Peter did not depart from Christ. No; he followed Him whereso-ever He led. And why? Because, (and this is the second and most valuable quality of all his acquired graces), *he had a deep love for Christ.* 'Lord,' he said to Him in his last recorded interview with Him in the Gospels, 'Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love thee.'

It was a true word. Peter was not boasting then. All his earthly life he had been in love with Christ. His sense of sin at the first, his refusal to let Jesus wash his feet, his sword-thrust in the garden of betrayal, his tears of penitence in that dark night, his race to the sepulchre on the morning of Resurrection, they are all chords in that great strong anthem which finds its outburst on the lake shore, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.' As Chrysostom has truly said: 'If John is the disciple whom Jesus loved, Peter is the disciple who loved Jesus.'

It was this love made Peter the man he afterwards became. During the earthly life of Jesus it was leading Him steadily on from strength to strength; but it was not till after the Resurrection it became the great absorbing passion of his soul. On that morning when the holy women of the sepulchre brought to his lacerated soul the first message of hope, they added, that that message contained a special mention of Peter. 'Go tell my disciples *and Peter*,' it ran. 'And Peter'—I can almost hear Peter's heart beat with joy as that glad word was brought to his ears. '"And Peter," did He say? Then He loves me yet.' And so there began that glad race to the sepulchre, which never ended till he laid down his life at the feet of the Master he loved so whole-heartedly, at the Eternal City.

It was the love of Christ made Peter what he was, and though it did not at once eradicate all the evil elements of his nature, for the grace of God does not change the elements of a man's nature, it yet refined and strengthened them in such a way that he became in the end the Man of Rock. I have already told you how even after Pentecost we see the weakness of Peter's nature coming out from time to time; but it was never allowed to usurp the throne of his will in the old way, and at the last he died a martyr, asking only one request of his executioners, that he might be allowed to be crucified head-downward, 'for,' he said, 'I am unworthy to die in the same posture as my beloved Lord.'

In my previous studies of Bible Characters, I have already quoted Ruskin's fine account of the Restoration of Peter from his *Bible of Amiens*. On the western gate of that Cathedral there is a statue of Jesus, well known as 'the good God of Amiens.' On either side there are figures of the Twelve. Above each is a bas-relief representing their most conspicuous virtue and beneath it their corresponding defect. In Peter's case the quality is Courage, and there is carved beneath him the figure of a knight riding on some wild beast, a lion or leopard. Below is a picture of cowardice, a man running away from the same wild beast. The lesson it is meant to teach is beautifully true of Peter. By contact with Christ a man's weakness may become his very strength. What before he fled in fear, he now uses as a war-horse on which to ride on to victory.

III

THE MAN WHO TOOK THE BACK SEAT

'And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is the sons of thunder.'—St. Mark iii. 17.

'And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.'—Acts xii. 2.

St. James, 'the greater,' as he is sometimes called, is obviously one of the leading men in the Apostolic band. This is evident from the fact that he was introduced by our Lord into His closest fellowship. In every committee there is usually a 'big three' or 'four,' by whom, on account of pre-eminent qualities or official position, the executive part of the work is done. It was so with the Twelve, though it is somewhat strange that Judas Iscariot, who was the Treasurer of the common purse, does not seem to have been a member of it. No doubt

Jesus had an instinctive distrust of him from the first. At all events, the inner circle of the Twelve consisted of three —Peter, James, and John.

It was these men He took with Him into His most intimate experiences and difficult situations. Thus, when He raised the daughter of Jairus from death, we are told that He suffered no one to enter the death chamber ‘ save Peter and James and John.’ Again, when He climbed the Mount of Transfiguration, it was these three again whom He permitted to be ‘ eye-witnesses of His glory ’; and, last and most significant of all, when He cast Himself to the ground under the olive trees of Gethsemane, it was the same three who were asked to share by sympathy their Master’s sorrow.

St. James must then be regarded as one of the greatest of men. He is eminent even in ‘ the glorious company of the Apostles,’ and is famous in history as the Patron Saint of Spain. Yet the strange thing is that we know almost nothing about him. His biography might be written on ‘ half a sheet of note-paper.’ We know about many a famous cricketer or golfer more than we do about the second of the Apostles !

Does not this suggest to us, What a questionable thing is earthly fame ? How strangely are its awards bestowed ! As George Eliot says somewhere, some of the world’s greatest benefactors, the discoverer, for example, of bread, or the inventor of letters, are quite unknown. Had James wanted to get himself into the ‘ Who ’s Who ’ of the Acts of the Apostles, I dare say he might easily have done so. That he was a man of front-rank power is evident from the fact that when Herod sought to destroy the Early Church, the first two he laid hands on were Peter and James. He, with Peter, was then obviously one of the chief pillars of the Church.

And yet James makes no noise in the Acts ! He is barely mentioned. How different from his earlier days ! There had been a time when no man was more ambitious of being in the limelight than James. But with the Cross that time passed seemingly entirely away. When Jesus cried 'It is finished,' James's pride was finished too. With Watts he then could say :—

'When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.'

Let us look more closely at this man before Jesus 'made him.' As we do so, we may be encouraged when we see that if there is often much that is mean and self-seeking in ourselves, there could hardly be more than there was in this man at the first; and yet the self-seeker of the Gospels is the self-effacer of the Acts.

I. Looking, then, at James as he is mirrored in the Gospels, let us mark first of all—*Christ's Ideal of James.*

He surnames him when He first ordains him, as He did Peter, by a new name, 'Boanerges,' the Son of Thunder. Now that is a grand name. There is something dignified about it. It is evidently given as an honour. But what exactly does it mean? Obviously this at least, that there was a certain burning and even volcanic quality about the man. Our first supposition would be that he and John would be loud, sonorous preachers; like John Knox, of whom James Melville writes that before he was done of a sermon, he was 'like to ding the blads out of the cushion' on which the pulpit Bible rested; so fierce was he in gesture and utterance.

And probably it was so. The only preaching, indeed, which we hear of in the Acts is that of Peter and Stephen and Paul. But that is because their sermons were historic and led to epoch-making events. We read, however, of all the Apostles that 'daily in the Temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ'; and though I have no faith in the tradition that James was the Apostle of Spain, I have no doubt that in this work of preaching he was supremely great. He was a Son of Thunder. He was a man of fire. He had 'thoughts that breathed' and 'words that burned.'

How great a gift to the Church is a Son of Thunder. I am perhaps addressing young men here who are gifted with this sacred fire of eloquence. Why should you not consecrate this to the service of Christ? Why are all our clever young men crowding into the Bar, or Medicine, or Commerce, or Politics? Is there no spirit of sacrifice among our young men to-day? Are there none like St. James; when he, realising that he was made for something better than making money, straightway rose up at the call of Christ, left his father's fishing-boats and faced a life of poverty, hardship, and death for the sake of Christ and Humanity?

James was a man of fire *in the pulpit*; but it would be a mistake to *limit his thunder-like qualities to that only*. Some men, like Aaron, are full of eloquence in the pulpit; but they are very weak and irresolute when they get out of it. Indeed, this has been said to be a danger of eloquence, that it is often associated with softness of moral fibre. It was not so with James. He had in him that wondrous thing men used to call zeal; but which we now dignify by the grander word *enthusiasm*—that energy of soul, which when it takes up any purpose does so with all its might and will not rest until it has carried it through.

It was said of Julius Cæsar that whatever he wished, he wished strongly. Such a man in his own lesser arena was St. James. Whatever he wished, he wished strongly. He threw himself into any cause he undertook with a passion that carried all before him. Like Hannibal when they said to him, 'What of the Alps?' he could reply, 'There shall be no Alps!' As the lightning flash cleaves its way through wood and rock till it finds rest in the earth, so James's resistless energy refused to accept any obstacle in its path until it had crowned its accomplishment with success or died in the attempt. It was this that Jesus meant of him and John when He said, 'Ye shall be called Boanerges—the sons of thunder.'

It is a great gift. Would we had more of it in the Church to-day! Let us pray for a baptism of the Holy Spirit, that we may have more of that holy fire for which the prophet prays when he says: 'Oh! that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, *as when the melting fire burneth*, . . . that the nations may tremble at thy presence.'

Yes; for though zeal is from one point of view a natural gift of great souls, it is, from another, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. He is the spirit of fire. 'He came in tongues of living flame,' and on whomsoever He rests He produces that holy enthusiasm which is the secret of success in every work; but in none so much as in the work of God. In the words of the old Latin hymn :—

'Thy blessed unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.'

II. James, then, was the Apostle of Zeal, fiery, indomitable zeal; but we have all, as the French would say, 'the defects of our qualities,' and James, just because he was so zealous, *had certain grave defects in his character.*

One of these was *Intolerance*, a disease of the religious consciousness which has produced perhaps more terrible and cruel results than any other malady. Some one has said, 'The saddest of all histories is the history of the Church of Christ.' That is, of course, a very one-sided statement. From another point of view, the grandest of all histories is the history of the Church of Christ. Nevertheless there is much truth in it. 'O Religion, what crimes have not been done in thy name.' Yes; and among the crimes which have been perpetrated in the name of religion, there have been none so cruel as those done by Intolerance. It is the very masterpiece of Satan's cunning that in the name of Christ he has let loose upon humanity some of the most savage deeds and hellish movements that have ever darkened the page of history.

Now James, as we see him in his early days, was deeply dyed with this stain of Intolerance. This was due to the very zeal of his character. He could not brook opposition to what he believed so passionately to be true. There is a tolerance which is common to-day that is due to the fact that its possessor has no strong convictions to be intolerant about. It is the tolerance of a jelly-fish; which strikes against nothing because there is nothing in it to strike. It was not so with James. When he gave his heart in allegiance to Jesus, he gave it passionately, and so one day when his Master had come weary and footsore to a Samaritan village, begging the usual hospitality of the East, and the fanatical peasants refused to take Him in because

He was going to Jerusalem, James turned upon them with fiery fury and said, ‘Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven to consume them, as Elias did ?’

It was a wicked, revengeful prayer; and the fact that it was justified by the example of Elijah shows us how dangerous it is to use the Old Testament as a rule for conduct without first seeing how it is amended by the New. That Christ in His answer condemns the conduct of Elijah I make not the smallest question, and yet how often has the Old Testament been used to justify the injustices and cruelties in which religious zeal has indulged towards those of another creed than its own.

For it is not merely a spirit of revenge at churlish treatment of their Master that we see in this prayer of James and John, it is also one of fanatical hatred against these insulters of their Master, *because they were Samaritans.* Had they been Galileans, we may be sure that, however angry James had been, he would never have let his wrath carry him to such lengths. But that Samaritans, a despised set of schismatics, with tainted blood and no history, should have dared to offer an insult to the true seed of Israel, this was more than could be borne!

But to Jesus such a temper was the very antithesis of the spirit He had come to impart. ‘Ye know not what spirit ye are of,’ He said. ‘The Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.’ All through His life we see an attitude to the Samaritan question which must have astonished and even grieved James and John in these early unsanctified days of discipleship. One of the finest characters in His portrait gallery of Parabolic Teaching is one of the despised Samaritans, and some of His most wonderful words of life were spoken to a poor outcast of the same despised race. And shortly before this very incident, the Evangelist tells of how John had come to Him and said: ‘Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name and he followeth not us; and we forbade him because he followeth not us.' But Jesus replied in memorable words: 'Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is on our side.'

To Jesus the spirit of intolerance is the very antithesis of the spirit of the kingdom of heaven. There is only one intolerance of which He approves, and that is *the intolerance of sin.* To that He gives no quarter. Too often the intolerance of men has been about intellectual punctilios or pin-points of ecclesiastical distinction, while the great evils of Intemperance, Impurity, and Infidelity are regarded with indifference and in some cases with indulgence. In its hatred of those who will not pronounce its petty shibboleths, it has given a licence to any laxity of faith or morals; saying, 'Accept my Church and you can do or believe what you like.' To such an attitude the Spirit of Christ presents 'an everlasting No'; and it was because He saw too much of it in the bigotry of the sons of Zebedee that He says to them here, 'Ye know not what spirit ye are of.'

III. The other stain on the early character of James was also a result of his zeal. He had in these days *a very selfish Ambition.* When a man identifies himself with any cause, when he gives himself up wholly to it, he is apt to expect a high place in it when its interests triumph. This may be natural in the affairs of the world; though even there we ought to remember that there are others to be considered as well as ourselves. But such a spirit is altogether foreign to the Kingdom of God. Love to Christ should be the paramount motive; and where love is, self passes out of sight. Does a true wife complain that, in the recognition given to her husband, little reference is made to herself? In the recently published biography of Campbell-Bannerman we see how large a part his wife played in that statesman's career. Yet she was unknown to the great world in her husband's life. Did she complain of that? On the contrary, her only complaint was that her husband was too ready to let himself be pushed aside; that *he* did not assert himself enough.

So should it be with the Christian in his work for Christ. It is not his own recognition he should think of. His motto should be the noble one of the Baptist, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.'

This lesson was beautifully learned by the Apostle James afterwards; but at first he was far from understanding it; and hence we see him figuring in that very ugly scene in the Gospels where we find Salome, his mother, putting him and John forward and praying the Master that they might have the first places in the coming Kingdom.

Some have blamed Salome for this request, and no doubt mothers are often very ambitious for their sons. I remember once, at a social gathering, hearing a voice speaking in an angry tone to a timid, shrinking girl who was sitting by herself in a corner of the room, saying, 'Whit are ye sittin' by yerself, alane, in the corner of the room for? *Can ye no push yerself forward?*' Looking round, I caught sight of a very hard-faced modern Salome, who was thus expressing baldly and nakedly what is the unspoken creed of many a soul to-day.

Salome may have been of that type. But I can hardly think that a man like James could have been an unwilling tool in her hands. He was no child then; but a man probably of thirty years of age, and he was no weakling to be cajoled by his mother into doing what he disliked. No: I might believe that John was a tool in the hands of his brother and mother. I cannot believe that James was ever a tool of any one.

And yet what a sorry scene it was! Can we not trace the shame of Christ, as He saw His chief disciples so demean themselves, in the vexed words with which He addresses them, 'Ye know not what ye ask.' It means, I take it, 'You know not what you are doing, when you ask a thing like that. If you considered more what an exhibition you are making of yourselves you could not do a thing so mean, so selfish, so unworthy as that which you are stooping to now.'

But then, seeing the natural indignation of the Ten rising at such a presumptuous and ignorant request, the Master wisely leads their thoughts to higher things. In the world, He says, the question of place and power may have its sway; but it will not be so in His Kingdom. There the greatest shall be the most lowly; even as the Master of all is to be the servant of all; for 'the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.'

It is good to think that a time came when James beautifully laid this lesson to heart. As I have said, one of the surprises of the Acts is the almost utter absence of his name. It was not that he was a nobody. His place as the Proto-martyr of the band is sufficient refutation of such an explanation. But apparently, ever after the Cross, he entered on a path of deliberate self-effacement. He became a back-seat man. He refused to let his name appear in the lists at public meetings. Wherever hard work had to be done, there James was to be seen. Wherever honours and recognitions were going, there James was invisible; and when he died he seems to have left word that there was to be nothing said about him. Else why does Luke spend half a chapter in telling us about Rhoda, a servant-maid, and say nothing about how the first martyr of the Apostles drank the cup? Oh! I can hardly forgive Luke for that silence! I am glad to hear about Rhoda running to and fro at Peter's door; but why is there nothing about James?

Yet there is something in deeds which is more eloquent than words; and in that brief sentence in the Acts there is much food for thoughts that are beautiful and solemn: 'Now about that time, Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church, *and he killed James the brother of John with the sword.*'

Sometimes the silences of Scripture are more impressive than their speech. The historian tells us nothing about James in these last lonely hours; but I like to think of the once ambitious man going back in memory to that day when he and John had begged the chief place in the band. How far he is from that now! But in all that shameful episode there is one word he can recall with a smile of satisfaction. It was that word of Jesus, 'Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' He had answered that question of Jesus with passionate determination, 'We are able.' And he had meant it then; though he did not understand all it meant. But now, as he looks clear-eyed into the future, he knows *all* it means; and he can repeat it with deeper and grander emphasis, '*I am able.*' Yes; he had been true to that word. He had not faltered at the cup before, when it meant the loss of all earthly things. And he would not falter now!

What took place at that last death-scene we do not know. Eusebius the historian quotes from Clement of Alexandria a tradition of the Early Church, that the accuser of James was so much moved by his dauntless bearing at the court that he declared himself to be a Christian and was carried off with him to execution. On the way thither he asked forgiveness of the Apostle, who, after a moment, kissed him saying, 'Peace be unto thee.'

Whether the story be true or not, we may be sure there would be 'no weakness' in James at the last. That ardent soul would show that he had not replied falsely, 'We are able.' Have we not Christ's own word for that: 'Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I am to drink of'?

Ambition is not a wrong feeling. It is the natural implantation of the Creator in every soul. But ambition needs to be sanctified. It needs to be directed to noble causes. Now the love of Christ did that for St. James. It transformed a self-seeking bigot into a silent and self-sacrificing martyr. The vision of the Cross constrained him to live no longer unto himself but for Him who died for him.

> 'Love took up the harp of life and smote on all
>   the chords with might,
> Smote the chord of self which trembling passed
>   in music out of sight.'

Or perhaps in the still more appropriate words of Matheson, James learned to sing in his dying hours :—

> 'O Cross that liftest up my head,
>   I dare not ask to fly from Thee:
> I lay in dust life's glory dead,
> And from the ground there blossoms red
>   Life that shall endless be.'

IV

THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED

'Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following.'—St. John xxi. 20.

It has been suggested that there is a certain boastfulness in John's description of himself as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' Did not Jesus love all His disciples? Even if, as is certainly the case, He showed special marks of His love for John, can we suppose it proper that he should thus describe himself as the person whom *par excellence* Jesus loved? If he had spoken thus at the beginning of his acquaintanceship with the Master, we could understand it better; but does it not argue an unpleasant self-complacency that at the close of his long life, when we should expect him to emulate the humility of St. Paul in his self-estimate as 'the chief of sinners,' John should speak of himself as the one whom Jesus loved above the others?

Various explanations have been given of this difficulty. Thus Mr. Golder Burns[1] argues that John does not say Jesus loved him *above* the others. He only says that Jesus loved him. But I do not think that such a view can be borne by the phrase. It is followed by the words, 'who also leaned on his breast at supper,' arguing a peculiar pre-eminence of intimacy; and the phrase is used four other times in the Gospel, showing that in the inner circle of Jesus' friends, John occupied a position all his own.

To my mind, the best explanation of this difficulty is that this title was not given to himself by John at all; but by some disciple of his who edited his memoirs of Jesus after the Apostle was dead. There are other marks of a reviser's hand in this Gospel; notably the words that follow in the twenty-fourth verse: 'This is the disciple which testifieth of these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.' It is impossible to believe that John wrote these words himself; and what I am inclined to think is that, after the beloved disciple had written or dictated his 'Memorabilia' of Jesus, he handed them to this disciple to prepare for publication after his death. Nowhere in them does he mention himself as their author, and his disciple has inserted this description, one which was well known doubtless to all the early Christians, in order that their authorship might be known and their authenticity assured.

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[1] *The Chosen Twelve.*

However that may be, there is no doubt that Jesus loved John with a peculiar love. He loved all His disciples, and He did not love them less because He loved John more. But there are unmistakable evidences in the Gospels that He honoured this disciple with an intimacy and a confidence such as He gave to no others. The two great proofs of that are first of all the fact which is referred to in the words that follow our text, that *He permitted him to lean on His breast at the Supper table.* The hour of His death was drawing near, and, as a mother convulsively clasps her child closer to her breast when the hour of an eternal separation draws near, so on that solemn occasion Jesus drew His beloved close to Himself and folded him in His very arms. How close that friendship must have been which permitted its beloved to listen to the beatings of the Saviour's heart!

The other proof is *that given at the Cross*, when John was standing there with the Sacred Mother, through whose heart the sharp sword was then slowly piercing. Jesus, looking at her, could not bear the sight any longer. Seeing the beloved disciple, He broke His silence and said, 'Woman, behold thy son,' and then turning to John He said, 'Son, behold thy mother!'

'And from that hour that disciple took

her unto his own home.' We can well believe he would do so with pride and yet with breaking heart; pride that the Master had so honoured him, and yet far more, sorrow that he was saying 'Good-bye' to the man whom his soul loved above all others. There is a well-known picture called 'The Return from Calvary.' You see John and Mary in the foreground —Mary bowed and broken, leaning half-conscious on the noble manhood of the youthful disciple. John is supporting her with all a son's tenderness; but his face is turned backward to catch a last look of the solemn cross-crowned hill in the distance. It is his farewell, as he thinks, of his beloved Master.

What was there in John to draw out this peculiar love of Jesus to him? I would answer, three things: *his beautiful soul, his unquestioning faith*, and *his clinging love.*

(1) No doubt Jesus was from the first attracted to John by *his beautiful soul.* It was said of Dean Church that there

was such a 'moral beauty' about him that none could be long with him without loving him. There was a moral beauty about John which in the same way drew men to himself. His soul was stainless in its purity. He had given it to the Master when it was unsoiled by youthful passion, and though there was much in it in these early days that needed to be refined, yet in essentials it was free from the grossness of those that find their way to Christ through a swine-trough of animal indulgence.

Young men, if you want to be loved by Christ as He loved John, give your hearts to him in the days of your youth!

'In life's gay morn when sprightly youth
   With vital ardour glows,
And shines in all the fairest forms
   That beauty can disclose,
Deep in thy soul before its powers
   Are yet by vice enslaved,
Be thy Creator's glorious name
   And character engraved.'

Then, too, John's was a soul that was *nobly endowed.* None of the Twelve had a *mind* like John's. It was the greatest mind in the New Testament except Paul's, and in some respects it was even greater than his. Ancient art symbolised it by the Eagle, and, like it, it could soar to heights of imaginative insight unscaled by any other mind in the Early Church. Its two great words are Love and Life. 'God is love: in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten son into the world that we might live through him.' Salvation to John was no mere deliverance from penalty. It was that: 'He was the propitiation for our sins,' he says. But it was far more than that. Christ is the giver of a new and richer life. The words which he quotes from Christ are full of this. 'I am come that ye might have life and that ye might have it more abundantly.' 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' To John sin is a principle of disease and death, but Christ is the giver of a new life, and this life manifests itself in the believer in love; love first of all to God, but also and no less to the brethren. 'He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, for God is love.'

Can we wonder that one who had such an intuitive insight into the mind of Christ should have drawn out the Master's love as none else could have done? Like draws to like, and the eagle mind of John sped naturally in its flight to its eyrie in the clefts of the Rock of Ages.

(2) Then out of that penetrative insight into the mind of Christ there naturally followed *an unquestioning faith in His claims.* As Spurgeon says, there are no 'ifs' about John. His epistle is full of such phrases as 'We know,' 'We are sure.' Even his faults are often only the other side of his faith. His request, for example, to have a place next to Christ in His coming Kingdom was a proof of his faith. That was perhaps the meanest

thing John ever did. And yet see what faith it argued! Our Lord was very far from His Kingdom then, to outward seeming. He was despised and rejected of men; but there was no doubt in John's mind that a 'crowning day was coming by and by,' and his faith craved for a share in that enthronement.

Jesus was always attracted by faith; and the unquestioning faith of His young friend must have greatly cheered Him, as He found it so seldom 'on the earth.' Dr. Andrew Bonar says in his *Diary*, when an old man, that after his conversion, he could never recall a moment when he doubted 'his interest in Christ.' Such an unquestioning faith seems to have been John's from the first day he saw Him by the banks of the Jordan and said, 'Master, where dwellest thou?' to that glad hour when he looked into the empty tomb and 'saw and believed.' And the Master loved him for it. He loves those who, in spite of doubts and fears, press like Thomas to His side; but he pronounces a deeper blessedness on those ‘who have not seen and yet have believed.’

(3) But it was not his beautiful soul or his unquestioning faith that made Jesus love him most. It was *his clinging love.* ‘Why do you love your baby so much?’ I once asked a mother as she was smothering it with kisses. ‘I suppose,’ she said, ‘because he clings to me.’ John’s love to Christ was of this childlike kind. He clung to Christ with passionate devotion. He allowed nothing to come between them and resented any insult to his beloved. It was from this that the intolerance which we have seen in his early life sprang. It was this that had made his anger blaze out in the revengeful prayer he made with James, that fire might come down from heaven to destroy the Samaritan villagers who had insulted his Master.

I have mentioned Dr. Andrew Bonar of Glasgow. To those who knew him he was the likest man to John they had ever seen. He was the incarnation of gentleness and love, and yet my father once told me that when sitting with him at Edinburgh in a train that was about to bring them home from the May meetings there, he had seen Dr. Bonar's anger blaze out like a very Son of Thunder. An intoxicated man came into the carriage and began to swear at them, as such men often do to ministers. Dr. Bonar bore it in silence till the man took the name of Jesus Christ upon his lips, then his whole countenance changed. His face blazed with indignation. He called a guard and had him swept out of the carriage in a moment. The man was cowed to silence and left without a word. My father was amazed at the passion of indignation which had welled out so suddenly from one who in ordinary life was a very incarnation of meekness. It was a revelation of the Son of Thunder.

It was the same motive made John say of one who was casting out devils in the Master's name, but shared not in His fellowship, 'Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him because he followeth not us.' Jesus had no sympathy with such a narrow ecclesiasticism. 'He that is not against us is on our side,' He replied, in words which ought to have rung the death-knell of such exclusiveness had His followers entered into His large-hearted spirit. Alas, they too often failed to do so. 'I separate thee,' said the Bishop to Savonarola on the scaffold, 'from the church militant and triumphant'; but Savonarola nobly replied, 'From the church militant, yes; but not from the church triumphant, for that is not in thy power.'

But John at least entered into his Master's mind in this matter in his closing years; for there is no writer in the New Testament, not even Paul, who is such a Universalist as the once intolerant Son of Thunder. 'He is the propitiation for our sins,' he declares, 'and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world'; and with Peter he is the first to carry the Gospel to those Samaritans he had before desired to destroy. The love of Jesus wrought a mighty transformation in the heart of John. It changed the intolerant bigot into one whose large-heartedness included even the heathen world in the objects of God's atoning love.

As he grew older this message of God's love to man seems to have grown more and more upon him. There is a story told that when he was an old man and too feeble to preach a sermon, he used to be carried into the church every Lord's Day, and there he would just say one sentence to the congregation, and it was always this: 'Little children, love one another.' The people loved to see him, for he was the last survivor of the Apostles, but one day they ventured to say to him, 'Master, won't you preach something else to us to-day?' but he replied, 'It is the Lord's command, and if we fulfil this we have fulfilled all things.'

Nor was his the dreamy love of the sentimentalist, who waxes eloquent over the woes of humanity but does little to alleviate them; like Rousseau, whose glowing pages thrill with passionate love for Humanity in the abstract and when spelt with a capital 'H,' but who sent his children one by one when they were born to the Foundlings' Hospital. No, the love of John was intensely practical. Eusebius tells another story of John in his later days, that having 'arrived in a town not far from Ephesus, after having exhorted the brethren he observed a young man of a noble countenance and ardent spirit. Addressing the Bishop he said, "I commit this young man to thy charge." The Elder at first conscientiously fulfilled his task; he received the young man into his house and at length baptized him; but the lad allowed himself to be drawn away into immorality and then into theft. He fled the town and became the chief of a band of brigands. A short time after John again visited the Church.

After fulfilling his mission he said to the Bishop, "Restore me the trust I committed to thee." The Bishop did not at once understand. "I ask," said John, "for the young man whose soul I trusted to thee." "He is dead," exclaimed the Elder with many tears. "How dead?" "Dead to God," was the reply. "He fell away, was forced to flee for his crimes, and is now a brigand in the mountains." Hearing these words, John rent his clothes and cried, "What a guardian did I leave over my brother!" He quitted the church, made his way to the mountains, and gave himself up to the robbers.

'The young man recognised the Apostle and was about to flee, but John ran after him exclaiming, "My son, why dost thou flee from thy father? Have pity on me, O my son. Fear not. There is yet hope of salvation. I will stand for thee before the Lord Christ. If need be I will die for thee, as He died for us. Stop, believe, it is Christ sent me."

'The young man listened with downcast

eyes, then flung away his weapons and burst into tears. Throwing his arms around the aged saint, he implored his pardon with a flood of tears, which were to him as a second baptism. The Apostle raised him up and did not leave him till he had restored him to the Church, a living trophy of Christian love.'[1]

Never, as Pressense has said, had the parable of the lost sheep received so perfect an application. Can we wonder that the disciple of whom it is told should be 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'?

There is one practical thought which the study of this beautiful character leaves with us. We cannot perhaps be the object of the Saviour's peculiar love in the sense in which John was; but in a true sense we may be all disciples whom Jesus loves. And is not that a worthy ambition? Surely it is the worthiest of all. I say nothing against the lower ambitions which may animate the human breast—the love of wealth and honour and fame. Provided these are not sought in any selfish or sinful way, I would not deny their legitimacy. God put them into the heart, and they are at least better than the lazy, inert condition of the ambitionless soul. But surely above all these is this ambition of John. To be loved of the Master! To get near to the Master! To be able to say to the Master, like Peter: 'Whom having not seen we love; in whom, though now we see Thee not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' Yes, that is the highest of all ambitions. The blue ribbon on the coat shall fade; the gleam of gold shall become dim; there shall come a time when even Fame, 'the next grandest word to God,' shall be very little to us as we lie on a death-bed and the glitter of life's prizes fade away to our dying eyes.

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[1] Eusebius, *History of the Church*, iii. 42; Pressense, *Early Years of Christianity*, i. 3.

But to be loved of Christ! To feel His arms around us when the mists of dissolution gather, to hear His voice saying to us, when every other voice grows dim :—

> ‘Thou shalt see My glory soon,
> When the task of life is done,’—

this is the highest of all ambitions.

And how shall we realise it? Surely as John did. We may not have his gifted mind. We may not be able to paint the white throne of God as he did. We may not have the lofty imagination or the soaring pen of the great Evangelist. But we may all have his gift of love. We may all have Paul’s prayer answered for us, as he had it, ‘For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus that he would grant you . . . that ye being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length and breadth and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ.’

And we may have it by following John in his noble ambition, by ever living near Christ, until the spirit of Christ passes into us and we become ‘one with Christ.’

Browning has a fine picture of John in his 'Death in the Desert.' He represents him dying in a lonely cave where his friends had carried him from the persecution of Domitian. His last words are an assertion of the truth on which he had lived out his noble life, that God is love; and that that love is unassailably revealed in the Incarnation of God in Christ.

'For life with all it yields of joy and woe
And hope and pain—believe the aged friend—
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.
And *that*, we hold to the uttermost.

. . . .

I say the acknowledgment of God in Christ,
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it.'

In that faith John lived and in that he died. How or where we know not, but of one thing we are sure: holding it *to the uttermost*. His body lies in some unknown grave; but his spirit, the man himself,

'Lies as he once lay, breast to breast with God.'

V

THE PATRON SAINT OF PERSONAL WORKERS

> ‘He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias. . . . And he brought him to Jesus.’—St. John i. 41, 42.

St. Andrew has been spoken of as the commonplace Apostle; but doubtfully so. He was certainly a silent man. We seldom hear of him in the Gospels, and when he does speak it is only to give utterance to the most trivial remarks. But silent men are not always commonplace, just as talkative men are not necessarily original.

To my mind the greatest misfortune for Andrew’s reputation was the possession of his brilliant brother. Contiguity to the great is often a synonym for insignificance. We judge things by proportions rather than by magnitudes. A noble tree in a gentleman's park would be insignificant among the Redwoods of California. A hill that would be called a mountain here would only be a spur of Mt. Blanc or a hillock among the Himalayas. So Andrew is spoken of everywhere as 'Simon Peter's brother.' The most famous thing he did was to bring his brother to Christ.

As usual, the legends of the Early Church have tried to fill up the provoking blank. Andrew is said to have become a great missionary in Macedonia and Greece, and died there as a martyr by crucifixion, that form of Cross being used which is known as the St. Andrew's Cross. In the fifth century St. Regulus is said to have carried the bones of his master's right arm to Scotland when he founded the city on the Fifeshire coast which now bears the saint's name. And as St. Andrews was for long the ecclesiastical capital of Scotland, he became known as its Patron Saint.

But the truth of most of these stories

is more than doubtful. Probably, as I have said, the greatest thing Andrew ever did was to bring Peter to Jesus. Yet his character is not without a beauty of its own. There are three incidents in the Gospels where he is mentioned, and each of these is characteristic of the man. They are all of a piece and mark him out in that character in which I have ventured to introduce him here, as *the Patron Saint of Christian Workers*; the example of all those who, through the claims of business or the other limitations of life, are not able to do prominent work for God, yet none the less may do useful and indeed indispensable service for His Church. Let us look at these incidents in the life of St. Andrew, and then consider the lessons taught by his character as it shines through them.

I. And first, there is this incident of our text, *his introduction of his brother to Jesus.*

Andrew disputes with John the rare

honour of being the first disciple of Christ. He had followed John the Baptist until that unselfish man pointed Jesus out as a mightier than himself, saying, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' With unhesitating alacrity, John and Andrew followed the Lord, and on His invitation spent the night with Him. What took place at that interview John does not see fit to tell us. The soul's deepest secrets cannot be revealed to the world. But the result had been to fill Andrew with an absolute assurance of the Messianic glory of the newly found prophet; and there and then he embarks on the first Christian Mission—a *home mission*, as all Christian Missions should be at the first, for Christianity should begin in the Jerusalem of home. 'He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias.'

Now there are two features about this incident worth noting. In the first place, as I have said, it was a *home* mission. It was to his own brother. And was there not real courage in that? He was not afraid to speak to his own brother about Christ. That brother was a much bigger man than himself, and he seems to have been anything but a deeply religious one in these days. He was accustomed to curse and swear, as he did even to the close of our Lord's life, when roused to anger. But he had in him the makings of a noble man. Andrew felt that. 'If I can only bring this brother of mine to Jesus,' he said, 'I can make a man of him.' So to this Simon he goes, saying in joyful assurance, 'We have found the Messias, . . . and he brought him'—the word almost suggests physical force; he pulled him—'to Jesus.'

What moral courage there was in that! How few dare to speak of their religious convictions at their own fireside—to father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, sister, and specially brother! The old proverb says that 'the shoemaker's wife is the worst shod,' and it is, alas! often too true that men who are great workers in the Church are dumb to their nearest and dearest. Without being sanctimonious, there are times when we are called on to emulate Andrew's courage in the home. A personal word from an elder brother is often more effective than a voice from a pulpit, provided it is spoken in a modest and kindly way. It was because the barriers of religious reticence were broken down in the early days of Christianity that the new faith spread with the rapidity of an epidemic. 'He *first* findeth his own brother.'

And then, in the second place, it was a *personal* work. 'He *brought* him to Jesus.' Andrew stands out here as the pioneer of button-holers. Of course, that is a kind of work we may often do very badly. I shall speak of that later on. Meanwhile I ask you to notice that Andrew did it well, and that when well done there is no more useful work one can do for Christ and his fellow-men. Politicians and commercial travellers know how important is the personal touch. Let not the Church alone lose sight of its value. The first bit of work that was ever done for Christ was a 'personal' work. 'He brought him to Jesus.'

II. I pass on now to look at the second incident in which the character of Andrew comes out—*his interest in boys.*

The wilderness of Judea is exchanged for the green hillsides of Galilee. It is a lonely place on the Gadarean shore; but the multitudes, spellbound, have listened to the wonderful words that fell from the Preacher's lips till the evening has fallen ere they know it. The question of giving them food comes to the front, and our Lord cuts the knot by the strange command, 'Give ye them to eat.' But whence? Two hundred pennyworth of bread—£7 in our money—would not be enough to provide for so vast a party. Then it is that Andrew comes forward in the same beautiful character we have already seen him fill, as an *Introducer to*

Christ. 'There is a lad here,' he says, 'who hath five barley loaves and two small fishes; but what,' he adds with a touch of diffidence, 'are they among so many?'

There is incredulity here, and yet there is hope as well. Andrew has such a wonderful trust in Jesus that he sees some possibility in this lad's small provision, and when Jesus says, 'Bring them hither to me,' we can picture the joyful confidence with which he brings the boy forward.

Now, is there not something characteristic of Andrew in this? He sees the boy, sees the eagerness in his face perhaps, and is ready at Jesus' word to make him the means of doing a wondrous deed. The first incident marks Andrew out as the Patron Saint of Home Missions; it is perhaps going too far to say this one marks him out as *the Patron Saint of Sabbath Schools*; and yet the fact remains that it is this sympathetic eye to the boy and his capacities that constitutes the ideal Sunday School Teacher. He notices him, which the other disciples had not done, introduces him to the Master, and thus makes him the vehicle of a miracle.

It is this, teachers, we want you to do. Keep an open eye to the capacities of the boys and girls under you. Do not think them of no account though they may seem to have capacities as limited as five loaves for five thousand men. Above all, bring them to Jesus; and there is no limit to the results that may crown your efforts.

As a modern writer puts it:—

'Quick eye had Andrew. He it was amid
The thronging multitudes, that marked the lad;
And what his basket and how much it had,
Two fishes small and loaves of barley five,
Rewarded eye, to trivial things alive;
In that poor basket, what rich mercy hid!

'A brother's heart had Andrew. Joy beyond
All joy to him, the promised Christ to find,
But heavenly joy may not to duty blind.
He cannot rest, his bliss is incomplete,
Till Simon sits with him at Jesus' feet;—
His brother then, by more than natural bond.

'O happy they with Andrew's eye to heed,
A lad and his scant business, in the throng;
Nor by high scorn to do his efforts wrong:
And happy they with hearts that will not rest
Till in their bliss a brother too is blest.
What joy a Peter to the Lord to lead!'

III. Nor was this the last of Andrew's work *as an Introducer to Christ.* At the close of His life, when the shadow of the Cross was beginning to fall deep on Jesus, certain Greeks came to Philip, attracted perhaps by his Greek name, and begged an introduction to the Saviour. Philip did not feel sure what to do. Jesus was no lover of curiosity-hunters. He might think it a liberty to intrude upon Him then, at Jerusalem's great feast, when every eye was upon Him. So Philip went to Andrew and asked his advice. *He* knew the Master better. He was sure He would only be too glad to see any stranger who came with such a request, and at once he volunteered to introduce them to Christ.

It was his old work—the Introducer; what he began with, and what I have no doubt he continued to the end of his ministry. And surely no better work can be conceived, the introducing of souls to Jesus. He was not an orator. He seems to have been no great preacher; but he had the power of personal influence, which is one of the greatest gifts a man can possess, and especially in work for Christ.

If the first incident in his life shows the interest he had in *Home* Missions, the second his fitness for *Sabbath School* work, this third one shows that he had no less *a heart for the Foreign Field.* It is sometimes said, Why give to Foreign Missions when you have so much work needing to be done at home? The answer to which is just this, that they who have the most interest in Home Missions are they who have the most in Foreign Missions. The two are in fact one. Both spring from a common root, love to Christ and love to the souls for whom He died. So we find it to be with St. Andrew. The first of Home Missionaries, he was the first to show sympathy with the Foreign World in its longing for Christ, and thus did not a little to rejoice the Saviour's heart in his dying hours. 'And Jesus answered them and said, The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified.'

And now, turning from Andrew's character, let us look at some of the lessons which its consideration teaches us.

(*a*) The first is this, *the value of developing our own gifts, however modest they may be,* and *not of allowing ourselves to get into the habit of envying those of others.* Had Andrew been an envious man, he might have found much cause for jealousy in the lot of his brilliant brother. He was with Christ before him, he was the means of bringing him to Christ, and yet he was far eclipsed afterwards in the position he took in the chosen band. He was never allowed to penetrate into the inner circle of the chosen three. He never climbed the hill of Transfiguration. He never listened to the sighs of Gethsemane; and the same subordination to Peter is even more marked in the Acts, where, while Peter walks in the limelight, Andrew is but a name.

There is room for envy here, envy ripening into discontent and even culminating, like Judas, in apostasy. But there is not a trace of this in Andrew. He willingly accepts his humble place in the Church as the one he is best fitted for, and fills it with contentment and even joyful alacrity. 'I have not the public gifts of Simon,' he said to himself, 'but I have gifts of my own. I can do personal work. I can persuade men. I can see the possibility of a Christ in the most unlikely places. Let it be my work in life not to bring congregations by the thousands to Christ like Peter, but to bring individuals one by one.' *Let us be humble enough, brothers, to be ourselves*, and we shall find that that is the only way, and yet a sure one, to be of use to others. There is only one way we can do anything well in life, and that is by being ourselves.

(*b*) Then, in the second place, we see in Andrew's case, as I have already hinted, *the value of the personal touch in his work for Christ.* It is this, perhaps, we need more than any other in the Church to-day. We have no lack of Churches and no lack of preachers and no lack of missionaries—for the home field at least—but what we do need more of is personal workers, men and women fired with the love of Christ in such a way that, like Andrew, they can go to the brother without and bring him in with the tender hand and the tactful word.

Such work indeed needs tact. There are some who are deplorably lacking in the spirit of wise personal work. They seem to think that the best way of winning a man to Christ is to present a pistol to his head and ask him, 'Are you saved?'

It was not so Christ won the woman at the well. It was not so He won Zacchæus, and I am very sure it was not so that Andrew *brought* Peter to Jesus. He brought him. He did not order him. He did not say ‘ Go ’ ; no, he said ‘ Come.’ I can see him linking his arm with his unwilling brother and gently urging him along as he would say, ‘ Come and see. Come and see.’

In his beautiful study of Andrew, Dr. John Ker tells of ‘ a young man who had fallen through the ice and was holding on to the edge in the agony of a death-struggle. They pushed a plank towards him ; but the end of it was covered with ice, and again and again his fingers slipped. “ For mercy’s sake,” he cried, “ don’t give me the frozen side.” We must not give men the frozen side. God does not give us the frozen side, when He so loved the world as to send His Son.’ If we are to be true personal workers for Christ, we must go in that spirit of loving and tactful sympathy which we see in Andrew in all the incidents of his brief biography.

But who is sufficient for these things ? How shall we become ideal workers for Christ and His Church ? Alas ! many of us feel sadly awkward at times in our dealings with men. We have none of the ready gifts of speech that our brother or sister possesses, and often feel tongue-tied when at Sabbath class or home visitation we should be able to say at least with Andrew, ‘ Come and see.’

(*c*) And that brings us to the third and last lesson we learn from Andrew, that *it is the experience of Christ that makes the true Christian worker*. What was it made Andrew a home missionary ? What gave him his power as a Christian worker ? It was this, that he had been with Christ on that first wondrous night of fellowship. It is said of Archimedes that after he had made a great scientific discovery he went rushing naked through the streets of Syracuse crying, ‘ Eureka ! Eureka ! ’ ‘ I have found it ! I have found it ! ’

It was so with Andrew. ‘ We have found the Messias ’ is the glad cry that bursts from his lips as he issues from the door of the Master’s dwelling on that memorable morning. Joy gives utterance to his heart. The words came flying to his palsied tongue and the prayer of the Psalmist is answered in his case :—

> ‘ My closèd lips, O Lord, by Thee
> Let them be openèd ;
> Then shall Thy praises by my mouth
> Abroad be publishèd.’

If we wish to learn the secret of being successful workers for Christ, this is the sure and indeed the only path to it. We must get to know Christ. We must abide with Christ ; and out of that knowledge and that experience we shall become successful Christian workers.

To close, Jesus made Andrew a Home Missionary, and by so doing He made him great. Had Andrew not been a home missionary he would have been nothing. He had no great gifts like Peter and John and Paul, who might perhaps have reached greatness in their own way without having ever come into contact with Christ. But Andrew owed all he was to Christ. Christ made him the first home missionary, and in so doing He made him great, He made him a man worth remembering.

He is not the last who was so made by the Saviour. The time would fail me to tell of the men who would have been nothing had Jesus not made them home missionaries—Wesley and Moody, and Booth and Barnardo, and Quarrier and a multitude of others too numerous to mention. But enough to say, He who made these can make you. Will you not let Him, then? Will you not go to Him, that out of that experience you may come forth like Andrew to be Home Missionaries, saying by your life as well as your lips, 'We have found the Christ'?

VI

PHILIP—THE SPIRIT OF ENQUIRY

'Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.'—ST. JOHN xiv. 8.

'THERE are,' says Ruskin, 'two kinds of curiosity. There is a mean curiosity—that of a child prying into a forbidden cabinet, and there is a noble curiosity—that of an explorer questioning the source of a great river or exploring the interior of a distant continent. But the noblest curiosity of all is that which questions the source of the River of Life and explores the continent of Heaven itself. Such things the angels desire to look into.'

Of this nobler curiosity Philip is the type in the disciple band. The first mention of him is a testimony to that. 'We have found him,' he exclaims to Nathanael, 'of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.' 'We have *found* him'; the words speak of a search. He does not say, We have come across him, stumbled over him by chance, as we sometimes do with our best blessings in life. No; but 'We have found him.' Philip had been evidently seeking him for years. The joy of discovery is measured by the length of its search, and the gladness of Philip the Christ-finder points to what must have been the sadness of Philip the Christ-seeker.

How did this nobler curiosity arise in Philip's mind? 'He was,' says John, to whom we owe almost all we know about Philip, 'of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.' The mention of Andrew, who had done so much in bringing Peter to Jesus, suggests that he might have done a similar office for Philip; and that all these men who are here mentioned in connection with Jesus were part of a fellowship of noble souls, with common hopes and aspirations after a new kingdom of God upon the earth.

Geography is more than the naming of places. The geography of our native land: is there no significance of a spiritual kind in that? Our foam-girdled shores and heaven-kissing mountains and rigorous climate: is there no significance in that? 'Wherever snow falls,' says Emerson, 'there usually is civil freedom.' So, when I read that Philip was of the city of Andrew, I do not wonder that besides its enquiry after fish, there was in Bethsaida an enquiry also after 'the river of life and the continent of heaven.'

Philip then comes before us as an earnest enquirer. He was a searcher of the Scriptures, and had learned in them of a coming King who was to restore the kingdom to Israel. It was when under the spell of that inspiration, kindled into flame doubtless by the preaching of the Baptist, that Jesus had met him, and thus when He said to him, 'Follow me,' Philip had no hesitation in obeying the invitation. He followed Jesus, and, as a result of his brief acquaintance, his expectation ripened into conviction, and he who was found by Christ became himself a seeker. He hastens to Nathanael with the joyful tidings, ‘We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’

Philip’s description of Jesus indeed indicates a considerable limitation in his knowledge of Christ. His human birth and lowly origin are as yet all that Philip knows of the Virgin-born Immanuel. How could he know more? But the fact that, in spite of this, he hails Him as ‘Messiah’ proves how powerful was the impression Jesus had made upon his mind; so that when Nathanael turns with contempt from the name of Nazareth he is ready to answer with assurance, ‘Come and see.’

Philip, then, represents *the spirit of enquiry* in the Disciple band. This character is borne out by all the incidents in which his name occurs. Thus, when

Jesus is about *to feed the five thousand*, it is to Philip He turns enquiringly, ‘ Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat ? ’ Jesus knew the mind of His disciple. He knew that Philip would be already making his calculations, and He was not deceived. The answer comes ‘ slick out ’ like that of a prize pupil at a school examination. ‘Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient that every one should take a little.’ Philip had been ‘at it’ already, and the answer came as quick as the report of a gun.

No doubt Philip’s enquiries here are not of a very exalted order; but such as they are they are characteristic of the man. The same thing comes out in the next incident in which Philip comes before us. This is *the desire of the Greeks to see Jesus*. These Hellenists wanted an introduction to the Master, and it was to Philip they went for it. It has been suggested that that was on account of his Grecian name; but I prefer to think it was rather due to his Grecian spirit.

Greece, as you all know, was the land of enquiry. Its enquiring spirit had done more to advance the continent of human knowledge than any other nation of antiquity. Now 'like draws to like,' and I have no doubt Philip must have told these Greeks of this wonderful new teacher from Galilee, and that it was because of this they came to him with the beautiful request, 'Sir, we would see Jesus.'

But the most notable example of Philip's enquiring mind occurs in *the question which I have taken as my text, 'Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.'*

You all know the circumstances of that request. It was 'the last hour.' The smitten Shepherd is soon to be taken from the scattered sheep. To comfort them Jesus directs the thoughts of the disciples to the great truth He had sought to teach them all through His life, the Fatherhood of God and the light it casts on the darkest of all mysteries.

Death, says Jesus, is only a going home. It is but an entrance to 'the Father's House.' To that Home Jesus goes, only to prepare a place for them, and in that place He will meet them again in an eternal fellowship.

Beautiful words!—if true. Yes, but are they true? Philip is by no means sure of it. He had come to Jesus as Messiah, and for a while rejoiced in that discovery; but he is not so sure about it now. Not that he has any doubts in Jesus Himself. He loves Him too well for that. His whole heart goes out to Him still. But this faith of Jesus in an Almighty Father—can it be justified? Philip is in great doubt about it. The dark things that occur in human life, and especially the deep shadow of gloom that has been cast upon his heart by the Master's announcement of His speedy death, and that upon a Cross—all this makes his assurance of a Divine Fatherhood at the helm of things a very nebulous hypothesis. Hence it is that he cries out to Jesus in the passionate exclamation of our text, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.'

Now I must confess I am at variance with most of the commentators about the purport of this prayer. Nearly all take the view that this was a very earthly request. What Philip wanted, they say, was some kind of theophany—a visible presence of the form of God, perhaps in human shape. I do not take that view at all. I think Philip was far too close a student of Moses and the Prophets (as he himself tells us) to believe that any man could see God and live.

No, what Philip means is this, 'Give me some proof, so real that I can no longer doubt it, that behind this maze of phenomena which we call life there is a Father's heart shaping and a Father's hand guiding all. Convince us with a proof beyond all doubting that "love is creation's final law," that "all 's law" and yet "all 's love," and this is the one thing I ask for. Better than gold or silver or fame or anything on the earth.' 'Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.'

This, to my mind, is the aspiration that beats through Philip's troubled soul as he puts this question to Jesus; and granting that it is so, the Saviour must have been pleased with it from one point of view. It went so deep and realised that the best things in life were spiritual, not material; that the most satisfying truth in earth or heaven, could one believe it, was this, that 'God is love.'

And yet, from another point of view, the question was disappointing; for it showed Jesus how little He had really effected in the 'Training of the Twelve.' His great purpose in teaching these men had been to show them that God was their Father; and yet here He is at the last day of His life, and one of His disciples is still putting to Him the question, 'Show us the Father.'

Hence it is that we can trace a tone of mild reproof in Christ's answer to Philip: 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known *me*, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?'

I. This surely is one of Christ's greatest words. Let us linger over it for a few moments. It teaches us—does it not?—that *a man may live a long time in acquaintance with Jesus and yet not truly know Him.*

That may be so with any great man. Suppose you had studied some great author with growing admiration, but knew him only by his books, and at last a desire took possession of you to see him and have a talk with him. With difficulty you procured an introduction and went timidly and yet eagerly to his house. A quiet countryside, let us say, 'far from the madding crowd.' As you went up the avenue, you perhaps met a rustic at work on the paths. You asked him if he knew the great man you worshipped from afar.

'Sure I do,' says the man, 'don't I do his garden?'

'How interesting! How does he look? What does he talk about? Give me a story about him,' you say.

But the rustic is disappointing. Beyond the fact that 'He 's a pleasant gentleman and fond of roses,' he has nothing to say.

'And what work of his do you like best?' you go on to ask.

'Work! He never works. He just writes books.'

'Yes; but I mean what book of his do you like best?'

'Book of his! I never read a book of his in my life. The only book I read, forby the Bible, is the *Pilgrim's Progress*. That makes fine readin'!'

And so you leave him, hopeless of getting anything. He has been with your idol ten or twenty years perhaps, and yet he has never known him—never as you know him who have never seen him.

So had it been with Philip. He had been with Jesus for a long time, and yet he had never truly known him ; *for a man can never know Christ until he has seen in Him more than man.* It is only when we see God in Christ that we truly know Christ. Without the Incarnation, the life of Jesus is the world's greatest tragedy, the crucifixion of all that is best in human life. But with it, 'the offence of the Cross' becomes 'the glory of the Cross,' and we see in His death as in His life a perfect picture, in two panels harmoniously blending, of the holy love of God.

That is the first thing we learn from Christ's word to Philip—*we never know Christ truly till we see God in Christ.*

II. And the second is complementary to it, *We never truly know God till we see Christ in God.* 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' You know *me*, Philip,' Jesus would in effect say ; 'you have no doubts of *my* love ; you who have been with *me* at Lazarus' grave and Galilee's lake shore. You can surely trust *my* heart ? ' And Philip would answer to that, 'Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.' 'Well then,' Jesus would say to Philip and to all the Philips that have come after him, 'believe that the same love which beats in the heart of the Son of Man beats also in the heart of the eternal God. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.'

Ah! it is a great faith. The Fatherhood of God has become so common a doctrine to us now that I sometimes fear we have lost something of the wonder and the beauty that it must have had when it first came to that hard Roman world, with its pantheon of lust, cruelty, and superstition. To hear for the first time that the story of the Prodigal Son was a page torn out of the diary of God—what must that have been to the publicans and the sinners of Christ's age?

Though we all say to-day that God is our Father, though we all join in Philip's Creed, 'I believe in God the Father, Almighty Maker of heaven and earth,' do we really believe it any more than he did when he cried, 'Show us the Father'? Whence, then, the worry and the fret that so often mar the serenity of our life? Whence the sin and the shame that so often devastate its hopes? Whence these bitter tragedies that we read of in the public prints so often, which the Coroner sums up with the formula, '*while in a state of unsound mind*'? Mind! It is not the mind that is most often unsound. It is the heart; it is the faith.

> 'If our faith were but more simple,
> We should take Him at His word;
> And our lives would be all sunshine
> In the sweetness of our Lord.'

If we only believed with all our hearts that Christ was God and that God was Christ, then these cares and worries and sins and follies which so often turn our memories into 'sorrow's crown of sorrow' and our hopes into fears that make the future dark with foreboding,—these things would all 'fold their tents like the Arabs and silently steal away.' We would come to *Him* and find rest to our souls.

Philip had not come to Him in that sense yet. But he was one day to do it. It was when the Spirit was to take of Christ and show Him in a new and deeper sense than he had known Him while on earth. It was when in the Upper Room the Holy Ghost would descend upon him with fire, and the timid enquirer would become the bold preacher.

Philip's after-history is not told in the inspired record; but a very persistent tradition makes him the Bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia; and a recent inscription discovered by Sir William Ramsay seems to confirm the tradition. This is an ancient inscription found in Hierapolis in which reference is made to the Church '*of the glorious Apostle and Theologian, Philip*.' Thus the seeker of the Gospels would seem to have at last become the finder. The enquirer of the Fourth Evangelist becomes the 'Theologian' of the Acts.

What, then, is the great lesson we learn from Philip? I would say, *the value of the spirit of enquiry in the Church of Christ.* It was because there was a spirit of enquiry among the young men of Bethsaida that Philip and Andrew and John became the first of the disciples of Christ. It was because of the spirit of enquiry that Philip put that great question to Christ which won from Christ that still greater answer.

There is a tendency in some quarters to stifle the spirit of enquiry in the Church. A friend of mine told me a story the other day about the late Mr. Bonar Law which is a good illustration of that. He was travelling with him one day and took out of his bag a book which he had just been reading. It was Sir Henry Jones's Gifford Lectures on *A Faith that Enquires.* He handed it to Bonar Law, remarking that it was worth reading. Bonar Law took it up and then said, 'But is its title not a bit of a contradiction? *Is it not the essence of faith that it never enquires?*'

Mr. Bonar Law's question, I fear, reflects the average layman's idea of faith—at least as it is formulated in the Church. *Faith never enquires.* But surely that is a vast mistake. Surely that has too often been the error and even the crime of the Church, that she has burked the spirit of enquiry and thus shut herself off from many fresh movements that would have given her new life. 'Your Church,' said a good man to me not long ago, 'is too case-bound. You should have more of the spirit of enquiry. Even if many things are wrong, you should be more ready to learn from them. There is always a right behind the wrong.'

I do believe he is right. I wish we had more Philips in the Church to-day—more men to put great questions to Christ and press for fresh answers to the deeper needs of the soul.

But while we value Philip's spirit of enquiry, let us not forget what Jesus said to Philip when He first met him, 'Follow me.' Philip never forgot that word. Though he enquired about many things, and though his enquiries often led him into deep waters, he never wavered in his allegiance to the Master. He always kept following. You remember Robertson's great sermon on 'Obedience the Organ of Spiritual Knowledge,' and you remember too how that earnest enquirer said that in his days of darkness there was *one* thing he always held fast to, *one* thing he never forgot, *the supremacy of the moral ideal of Christ.* 'Even if there was no God it was better to be true than false, better to be pure than to be unpure, better to be generous than to be mean.'

That was Philip. He ever followed the Christ ideally, and that is the one thing I would ask you to do if you are of the Order of St. Philip. 'Follow the Gleam.' Follow the eternal Christ which is in every man's soul, the Christ of Nazareth, the Christ of the moral ideal. Then, mayhap, He will bring you one day to a nobler Christ, the Christ that Thomas embraced when he said, 'My Lord and my God.'

VII

THE MAN OF THE SECRET LIFE

'Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.'—St. John i. 50.

Nathanael, to whom these words refer, must be regarded as the man whom the older Gospels know as Bartholomew. It is not necessary here to go into the reasons for this identification. Are they not written in the books of the Cyclopedias of the Bible? Enough to say that unless we discredit John's Gospel altogether, the conclusion is inevitable. Nathanael was the Christian name, as we would call it, of Bartholomew or the son of Talmai. In Nathanael's case we cannot but rejoice in the double denomination, for almost the only thing we know of Bartholomew is the infamous massacre of the French Protestants which bears his name. How strange that the man in whom Jesus saw no guile should have his name associated in history with an act that is all guile!

Thus does the devil try to blacken a good man's name; but God does not allow him to succeed in the end, and if Bartholomew is a word of ill-omen, Nathanael remains one of the most beautiful amongst the Apostles.

Our text is taken from the only passage in which this fine character appears: *Philip's introduction of Nathanael to Jesus* and *Jesus' welcome of Nathanael.*

In considering it, let us look first at *Nathanael's superficial view of Christ,* and secondly at *Christ's deep vision of Nathanael.*

I. Nathanael's view of Christ was very different from Jesus' vision of Nathanael. It was shallow; warped by prejudice and blinded by provincialism. 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' he said contemptuously to Philip. He himself came from Cana, a town some ten miles from Nazareth and possibly its rival. The criticism might have therefore been due to local jealousy; just as an Edinburgh man might say, ‘Can any good thing come out of Glasgow ?’—or vice versa.

That might be said in joke; but it is not always so said. ‘Can any good thing come out of Germany ?’ was often said during the war, and a man was howled down if he dared to suggest that anything good could have a ‘spiritual home’ there. Patriotism is one of the noblest virtues; but it degenerates sadly when it develops into a hatred for our neighbours. ‘Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ?’ says that petty insularity which parades as patriotic loyalty, and often shuts its victim out from what is noblest in history and literature.

Perhaps, however, there was more than local jealousy in Nathanael’s question. The taunt may have been deserved. Certainly, Nazareth gave a poor reception to her Prophet when some months after this

'He came to His own.' It may have been, therefore, well worthy of Nathanael's contempt; a town of ill-fame, materialistic in ideals, corrupt in morals. You might as well expect a diamond in its dust-heaps as a Messiah in its streets.

We should *never judge a man by his surroundings*; by his origin, by his appearance, by his clothes, as Carlyle would say. What is prejudice? 'Prejudice,' as one has said, 'is the lynch law of Society.' It means hanging your victim on the nearest lamp-post, and that post is public opinion. 'The fellow comes from a bad nest. He has a very mean and poor appearance. He is anything but my idea of the Messiah.' So said Nathanael of old, and so do many modern Nathanaels speak still. They judge after the appearance. They shut Christ out of the heart and bolt fast its doors with the bar of prejudice.

There is only one test we have any right to apply to a man or woman: it is the test of experience. And that experience cannot be won by a superficial glance at a man's clothes or his birth certificate. 'The Lord looketh not on the appearance, but on the heart.' And *we* should do the same. But it takes time to do it, and therefore let us stay our judgments of men till we have brought them to a higher court of appeal than the eye. 'Judge not after the appearance; but judge righteous judgment.'

This was the wise answer Philip gave to Nathanael. He did not argue with him. He was too clever for that. I do not depreciate logic—in its place. I spent a good deal of time on that science in college, and I do not regret it now. An illogical mind is like an ill-arranged cupboard, in which a dish of onions reposes on the butter-plate and salt-herrings spread their sweet aroma over the tea and sugar. Logic is good for the uneducated mind; but as a means of overcoming the convictions of an obstinate man—well, you might as usefully argue with a drunkard.

'A man, convinced against his will,
Is of the same opinion still.'

In the life of John Robinson of the London *Daily News*, the story is told of a Yorkshire vicar who had preached a sermon on the existence of God. He had raised up a man of straw, and after recounting his arguments he proceeded to pound them down one by one. Shortly after the vicar met one of his rustic hearers, who began to thank him for the discourse. 'Yes, sir,' he said, 'I liked your sermon mighty fine; but howsomever, I cannot help thinking *that there do be a God*!'

No: Philip did not argue with Nathanael. He simply said, 'Come and see,' and that is the best sermon ever preached to a doubting soul. 'Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him.'

I remember once having a strong prejudice against Joseph Parker. I had been reading some utterances of his in the newspapers which did not impress me with their good taste. Then I went and heard the man himself, and the big personality of that pulpit giant simply bowled me over. I said to myself, 'I had rather his faults and fifty more than the deadly dullness of a faultless mediocrity.'

'Come and see,' said Philip. I would say the same to my doubting friends here. Give Jesus a chance, give Him the chance you give to some great book or famous piece of music, when you persevere with it till you have got to like it. Persevere with Christ. Study His teaching. Follow His steps, and not till you have done that dare to say of the Sun of all the ages and the inspiration of history's noblest ideals, 'Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Must He always wear 'Jewish old clothes'?

II. And now let us look at *Christ's deeper vision of Nathanael.* He had many keys for opening men's hearts. Sometimes He used the Golden Key of Praise. That was how He opened Peter's heart. 'Thy name shall be no longer called Simon, but Cephas, a Rock.' Sometimes He used the Iron Key of Sacrifice, as when He said to Matthew at the receipt of custom, 'Follow me.'

Here He uses what I might call *the Magic Key of Omniscience.* He shows Nathanael that He is acquainted with all his ways, that his secret life lies open before Him like a printed page.

This penetration into Nathanael's soul is expressed by Jesus in a threefold way:—

(1) *As an insight into his present.* 'Behold an Israelite in whom is no guile.'

(2) *As a remarkable and to Nathanael supernatural knowledge of his past.* 'When thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee.'

(3) *As a glorious prophecy of Nathanael's future.* 'Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

(1) Christ's first word to Nathanael is one full of gracious acknowledgment. 'Behold an Israelite in whom is no guile.' A kindly greeting to one who did not deserve it! It would, however, have been

more welcome to Nathanael had he known it to be sincere. Christ could not, he thought, have any acquaintance with him, and he therefore takes it to be an idle compliment, which he brushes aside with the somewhat brusque reply, 'Whence knewest thou me?' Nathanael is not one to be bowled over by flattery; and yet (since a man cannot be unconscious of his ideals) he knows that there is no quality of character he covets more than that of being a sincere and true man; no psalm he more delights in than that which tells of the man in whose spirit there is no guile; and I dare say, if his friends had been allowed to speak, they would have confirmed the judgment of Christ, and said, 'Yes, Master, you are right: Nathanael is indeed an Israelite in whom there is no guile, and his very unwillingness to accept Your compliment is a proof of its correctness.'

(2) But, in the second place, Jesus shows Nathanael here that He has not only a penetrative insight into his present char-

acter, but that He is also acquainted with the secrets of his past life.

'Whence knewest thou me?' Nathanael asks somewhat brusquely, and Jesus answers solemnly, 'Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.'

What was Nathanael doing when Jesus thus 'saw' him? Surely it was something deeply significant when Jesus took notice of it, and when His reference to it made such a powerful impression upon him.

Most writers think he was praying. In these days, when houses were small, it was common to use Nature's sanctuaries for secret oratories. Even here such natural shrines are not unknown. In the Highlands of Scotland there is shown a burnside where a great preacher, Macdonald of Ferintosh, used to pray and preach. Even yet, as you walk beneath the trees there, a spirit seems to be in the wood as of holy men long dead whose prayers still haunt its 'sombre boskage' with sweet fragrance and holy calm.

So, perhaps, had this fig-tree been to Nathanael. It was his sacred oratory; and if that day, like many a devout Israelite, he had been praying 'before Philip called him' for the coming Messiah, we can understand how this announcement would make the powerful impression upon him which it evidently did: 'Master, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.'

We must not indeed read into these words the Athanasian Creed. To Nathanael the words 'Son of God' cannot have meant all it did in later days. Possibly it meant no more than this, 'Thou art a child of God; *i.e.* a real gift of God to our nation.' But at all events it meant the acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah, the Anointed of the Father, to bring deliverance to the Jewish race. All his prejudices are thus bowled over, and Nathanael, like Philip, has 'come and seen.'

(3) But Jesus is not content with this.

He closes His interview by giving also a *wonderful prophecy of Nathanael's future*, if only he abides in his present faith. 'Verily, verily, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.' These words have an Apocalyptic sound, and have been sometimes understood as referring to wonderful experiences like the Transfiguration or the Ascension, or the Vision of Christ in Paradise. But the meaning of our Saviour is quite different. The promise has reference to this life; and its imagery, though exalted, is only meant to symbolise Christ's nearness to His people in their time of need.

The words are evidently a recollection of Jacob's 'Golden Ladder at Bethel.' In that vision the lonely fugitive saw the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on a golden stair, whose bottom rested at his head but whose top leaned against the throne of God. No wonder Jacob rose from an experience like that feeling a new man. ‘Now the same blessing will be yours, Nathanael,’ said Jesus, ‘and not yours only’ (for the promise is not confined to Nathanael only); ‘the same glad sense of God’s nearness may be yours if only you give yourself fully and unreservedly to Me.’ ‘I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me’; but if you take Me as your Guide, then no real evil can ever touch you—a golden ladder of prayer, up and down which angels of benediction are ever passing, connects you with Him in whom all fullness dwells.

How comforting this must have been to Nathanael! To be in touch with God in every time of need! It is told of one of the Orkney islands, whose shores are precipitous cliffs, that on one of these there is a slate quarry. The workmen descend to the sea, upon which it opens, by a rope ladder. One night a sudden storm drove the quarrymen from their work. The ladder was left fastened to the cliff. Meanwhile a ship was struggling by in a night of growing gloom and tempest. At length she struck upon the foam-crested reef, and then the sailors, looking up at the beetling crag which rose a hundred feet above their heads, felt that their last hour had come. Suddenly, however, some one cried, ‘A ladder! a ladder!’ and looking into one of the clefts of the rock, they saw the heavy ends of the ropes dangling against the wall. In haste they stretched out a boat-hook from the fast breaking ship, tied the ladder to the bulwarks, and soon one by one were speeding up from the boiling cauldron, which a minute before seemed to have doomed them to a horrible death, into life and comfort and a joyous welcome. The vessel went to pieces so quickly that by the morning hardly a trace of her was left; but the crew escaped to a man. The ladder saved them all.

‘Such a ladder of Salvation,’ says Jesus, ‘will I be to you and to all who trust in Me. Not omniscience only, but what is better far, omnipresent help is Mine to give you, if you put your hands in Mine.' 'You shall see greater things than these.'

How these words were fulfilled to Nathanael we do not know. All we may be sure is, that they were fulfilled. For Nathanael gave his soul to Christ that day in full surrender, and never went back on the bargain. We see him with the rest of the disciples on the lake shore after the Resurrection, when John saw 'the Lord' and Peter received his great commission. We read his name in the Roll of the Upper Room that was after forty days the scene of Pentecost. Nathanael thus remained true to Christ, and Christ would be true to Nathanael. That promise He gave him would He fulfil more and more as life went on, until at the last he would awake with His likeness and be satisfied.

To sum up, what is the lesson his life-story leaves with you and me? Well, I would say it is this, *that the Saviour with whom we have to do is one that knows us* *through and through*; knows all our struggles and our tears, and is ready to put out a strong hand to help us in all these struggles if only we will lay our hands in His.

'I saw thee under the fig-tree,' said Jesus to Nathanael, and the same He says to us all. Christ knows our secret life. What Matthew Arnold said of Goethe is much more true of Christ:—

'He took our suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness clear;
And put his finger on the place
And said, "Thou ailest here, and here."'

What does Jesus know of *us* 'under the fig-tree'? Ah! perhaps something very different from Nathanael. Deeds, it may be, of sin and shame. Never mind! The same Jesus who said to Nathanael, though at the time he was so full of prejudices, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile,' that same Jesus can see all the shame and the sin that is in your secret life and mine, but see also, I hope, the longing for good that is there as well.

'The soul is naturally Christian,' said a great Father of the Early Church. Yes, there is an unconscious Christ in us all, a Christ that is longing to come forth into the clear light of consciousness and take His rightful place on the throne there, if only we will let Him.

'Down in the human heart,
Crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;
Touched by a loving hand,
Wakened by kindness,
Chords that were silent will vibrate once more.'

Christ knows your secret life, and Christ loves you in spite of and because of it all. Will you not come closer to this great omniscient Saviour, that He may not only put His finger on the place and say, 'Thou ailest here, and here,' but may add the words, 'Be whole of thy plague. Thy sins which are many are forgiven thee'? 'Because I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these.'

VIII

THE SOCIAL LEPER

'And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.'—St. Matthew ix. 9.

In every community there is a class of people that are socially dead. To be seen walking with them is to imperil one's reputation. To be seen dwelling with them is to lose it. For men it is happily a long process before they reach such a depth of social degradation. For women it is often painfully easy. But in either case when once reached, it is next to impossible to get out of it. Give a dog a bad name and you may as well hang him. Let a man or woman be branded by public opinion as bad—and public opinion is not always unjust; on the contrary, it is often fair and long-suffering; but let a man or woman finally come under the ban of public disapproval, let the 'stamp of the gaol' or the 'brand of the street' be placed upon them, and there is little or no forgiveness possible for them here. For them the day of Judgment has for all human purposes already dawned. 'He that is a leper once: let him be a leper for ever.'

Yet it was from this hopeless class that Jesus selected one of the glorious company of the Apostles when He called Matthew or Levi, the publican, to follow Him. Of the publicans I need not speak. Every Sunday School child knows who they were, and why they were detested. A great Latin historian tells us that he once saw in a town a monument with this inscription: 'To a good Publican.' The fact speaks volumes. An honest publican was so rare a phenomenon that it was worth while raising a monument to his memory.

Yes, but had Tacitus cared to enquire he might have discovered a more wonderful monument to a good publican than that one of stone. It was one that was raised by a humble carpenter of Syria; but it was destined to endure when the other was long obliterated and destroyed. It was the first of the four Gospels—the Gospel of St. Matthew, once the publican of Capernaum, now the Apostle of mankind.

There are three scenes in this wonderful story over which we may shortly linger before going on to speak of Matthew's after-life and the lessons it teaches. These are:—

I. The Call of the Master.
II. The Feast of the Sinners.
III. The Criticism of the 'Saints.'

I. As regards the Call of the Master, we may say, to begin with, that it is not to be supposed that this was the first time Matthew had heard the voice of Jesus, and that his conversion was a kind of miraculous summons which he could not resist. That view would subtract all the spiritual value of the story, and lower

Christ to the level of a vulgar mesmerist. Christ influences men through their intellect, their conscience, and their will. He refuses to exercise any undue pressure on any man, and if he does not come by the voluntary acceptance of his heart, he is not wanted at all. To Him one volunteer is better than an army of pressed men.

We have heard it said—the once popular 'Trilby' is an illustration of the belief—that mesmerists have been able to gain such power over the wills of their victims that they can say to one 'Go' and he goeth; and to another 'Come' and he cometh; and it has been asked, 'Why not use this power in the interests of religion? If a man, for example, is a confirmed drunkard, why not put him under the power of a mesmerist and command him to stop drinking?'

Well, in the first place, I would say that I doubt very much if such a prohibition would last long; but in the second place, and more important, Christ does not wish to have disciples on any such terms. The acceptance of His call must be voluntary, or it is unwelcome to Him. If you join His fellowship on any other motive than that of your heart's desire; because of the social pressure of your friends, or because it is fashionable, or, most hateful of all, because it will advance your interests, then you are no true disciple of His. To those who are willing in the day of His power, and to those alone, Jesus says, 'Follow me.'

Matthew, I say, had long heard of Jesus. He had seen the mighty works He did. He had been moved by the mightier words He spoke, and the whole soul of the man had gone out after Christ and the higher life. He had come to loathe the life of dishonesty and blackguardism in which he lived. He had come to hate the tricks of trade that scooped in the shekels which had before been his God. He had caught sight of a higher and nobler life, and that vision had created so intense a disgust with his present existence, that although he went down every morning to his tax-office, and took part in the extortion and dishonesty without which he could not make his business pay, and with which he could make it the most lucrative calling in Capernaum—as he went he loathed himself. Yes: and perhaps as he went that morning, he may have uttered the prayer —'O God, take me out of this! Open up some way that I may get rid of it.'

Do you wonder at this hesitation? Consider what he had to give up. He had to give up his business. You business men know what that means—his livelihood, his daily bread. Perhaps there was a wife and little children at home. Who is to provide for them? Oh! it cannot be done. Useless to think of it! Thus he went on, thinking in spite of himself, as he was counting out the gold and the silver, and the cheating and oppression went on as before—when lo! in the midst of it all he lifted up his eyes and saw Jesus looking at him. The very man he was thinking of was looking into his very heart, and reading all the anguish and the struggle going on there.

‘Jesus saw Matthew,’ we are told, and when Jesus saw a man—well we know what that means. It means something more than you or I would mean by seeing any one. We see only the outside—the face, the clothes, the expression—and we judge men from that. We say he is hard, she is cold; he is bad, she is unattractive; I do not like that frown on his brow, that sneer on her lip.

But when Jesus sees a man He sees infinitely more than that. He saw down into the very heart. You say he is hard or she is cold; nay, said Christ, there is a great tenderness within, but it has been crusted over by a life of struggle or disappointment. You say his voice is harsh and his manners rude. Nay, said Christ, there is more true humanity behind that gruff voice and rude manner than in yon polite scoundrel who never makes a slip in etiquette or raises his voice in temper.

Jesus saw the publican. He saw him, and He said, ' Follow me.' His eye pierced right down into that man's struggling soul, and He said, 'I have come to save you from it all. Follow me and I will make you, publican as you are, despised as you are—I will make a man of you.'

It was the turning-point in Matthew's life. The whole soul of the man rose up at that appeal. 'It is now or never,' he said, and straightway he rose up from that tax-office stool, went forth and left it all. He rose up and followed Jesus. ' He followed Jesus '—and I do not know a better way of putting what conversion means to a young disciple than just that. Sometimes, when we first begin to think of these things, we are in great perplexity as to what true conversion means. I know I was. I was told it was some great mysterious experience which was to come over me by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and that until I passed through it I was no true Christian, and was, indeed, in danger of eternal perdition. It was a great hour to me when I realised that Christianity simply means, in the first instance, rising up to follow Christ, and that there need be no magical experience about it ; that it was simply a decision of the will.

I don't say that that is all it means. I don't think a man can long be a follower of Jesus without coming to some clear understanding of who Jesus is; and that means doctrine. I don't think that a man who has gone deep into sin will be able to make that change of life which Matthew made without some big experience to drive him on. All I say is that these things are but the accidents and the results of what conversion is. Conversion is simply doing what Matthew did, leaving all to follow Christ.

II. And now let us pass on to the second scene in our story—The Feast of the Sinners, or the joy of following Jesus.

The severity of the struggle in Matthew's mind ere he broke away from his old life is measured by the joy that filled it when once he did it. The harder it is for a man to get Christ, the more will he find when he gets Him. Hence Matthew that morning, when at last the custom-house with its hateful associations was left behind, felt he could have leapt for joy. If he had been a versifier like Doddridge, he would have put his feelings into the well-known lines :—

'O happy day, that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice
And tell its rapture all abroad.'

Matthew could not do that. He was not a poet, but a business man. Yet he did signalise his joy in another and perhaps as truly lyrical fashion. He held a great feast. When you have any glad event coming off in your life, a wedding or a birthday, you too, if you are not a niggard, signalise it by some similar festivity. Like the father who had found his son, you call your friends together and say, 'Rejoice with me, for great happiness has come into my life, and I want you to share it.'

So was it now with Matthew. This was the wedding-feast of his spiritual life. It was the marriage of his soul with Jesus, the breaking away from the old illicit connections of the past, and the uniting of his heart with all that was pure and high and noble. Such was Matthew's idea in this feast. It was, I say, his spiritual wedding-feast.

But now a difficulty arises. Whom will he ask? His old friends? But these were sinners, and would Jesus care to dine with sinners? For Jesus must be there above all. He is the bridegroom of the feast. He feels instinctively his old associates are not worthy to sit at the same table with Jesus. And yet he feels he would like to have them there. It would be such a grand chance of bringing them and Christ together. Who could tell what might happen if they only saw Jesus as he himself saw Him?

Moreover—and this must have moved

him more than anything else—it would be an act of confession before the world. It would be a testimony for God to the very class among whom his past life had been lived: like a soldier confessing Christ in the mess-room; a workman in the factory; a merchant in the office; a sailor in the ship.

Such was Matthew's feast. It was a grand act of renunciation done before the world, perhaps as well in self-defence as in joyful confession. Some of you may remember the striking chapter in Luther's life similar to it; when the student of law at Erfurt, awakened by the lightning flash in the Thuringian Forest, resolved to give up his brilliant prospects in the legal profession and enter the Augustinian Convent there.

He said nothing to his fellows. He knew they would only try to dissuade him. But, like Matthew, he made a great feast. He invited all his old boon companions to a last jovial gathering. At the head of the table he sat as merry as any there. The jesting and merriment went on as before, for though Luther was as true a Christian as ever was, he saw no harm in merriment or laughter in themselves; but at length, when the hour got late and the feast was almost over, he arose and in a serious voice that hushed the voice of laughter, said: 'Friends, I want to tell you one thing before you go. This is the last night you and I shall meet as boon companions. To-night, this very hour, I enter the Convent. To-morrow I shall be a monk.'

And he kept his word. Turning to the door, taking only with him his cloak, his cap, and his Virgil, he fled along the dark streets of Erfurt to the door, knocked there—I have seen the very place—entered the narrow walls, and made the great surrender.

Such was Matthew's feast. It was his way of saying, 'Friends and messmates, I have resolved to give up my old life and follow Jesus. If you come with me it will be good for you. This is the gladdest day of my life. But if not, we must now say "Good-bye."'

It was not in Jesus to refuse an invitation like that. 'Come?' I hear Him say, 'Why, of course I'll come; and bring every sinner in the city to meet me, if you like. I love to be where sinners are.'

It was a daring act for Jesus to do. I do not think we fully realise how daring it was. Remember it was not like inviting thieves and harlots to a Christmas dinner in some great hall. It was like making these people your friends, sitting with them in your own house like equals, inviting them to your own table, making them eat with you as if they were your particular friends. It was not social patronage: it was social recognition Jesus gave to Matthew when he made Himself not only a guest at his house but sat with his friends and finally joined him to the disciple band.

It was daring, I tell you. I can well believe some of the disciples would not like it at first. They would say, 'It was going too far. It was good enough to welcome Matthew as a follower, but to dine with his friends and even to ordain him as an Apostle—that was going too far.'

And yet it was by doing such things that Jesus won the world, and it is by the same spirit alone that we shall win it to-day.

I remember Dr. Horton of Hampstead tell a story of a city missionary in Camden Town, North London. He had seen seated on a public-house doorstep three young women, and his heart was moved with compassion. He went and spoke to them, but they met him only with impudent and shameless derision. But undismayed he said :—

'I have four daughters of my own, you see, and perhaps some missionary may want one day to speak to them.' And they said :—

'Then they are bad girls like us ?'

'Oh,' he replied, 'they are by no means perfect.' That evening they were all penitent, weeping for their dismal past. 'And to-day,' added Dr. Horton, 'they are rescued and saved.' They were saved by the touch of a loving hand.

Is it stretching the fancy too far to suppose that on that day of Matthew's feast the woman first saw Him whose feet she was after to wash with her tears and wipe with the hairs of her head ?

III. In closing, let us look at the third scene : the Criticism of the 'Saints' and Christ's reply to it, or His apology for loving sinners.

Seen from within (as I have tried to show it), Christ at the Sinner's Feast is a beautiful sight ; but from the outside it had a very different look. A stained-glass window from within is a rich and beautiful thing ; but from without it is a mass of blotches. So from without this feast had a most sinister appearance. 'He is gone to be guest,' they said, 'with a man that is a sinner. Nay, worse, all the sinners are gone to dinner with Him.

What, then, must he be but a sinner too? "Birds of a feather flock together."'

Christ's defence of His conduct on this occasion is full of pathos and beauty. There is, indeed, a touch of irony in it, showing He had already estimated His critics at their true valuation, and proclaimed them, in spite of all their religiosity, loveless fanatics if not hypocrites, without a spark of the love of God in their hearts.

'Where would you expect to find a doctor,' He said, 'but among his patients? If he always went amongst the healthy folk, what would be the use of him? Grant, then, that you are the morally sound ones of Capernaum and they the sin-diseased, and where should I, the Physician of Souls, be but amongst them?'

'But,' He added, quoting a favourite prophecy of Hosea, 'go and learn what that meaneth: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." You are great in your external observances. You never make a slip in your outward behaviour; but take care, lest with all your righteousness of conduct you are lacking in these inward but far higher qualities of a true man, the quality of mercy, the quality of love, the quality of forbearance for the erring. If you lack these things, you are thousands of miles away from the Kingdom, however faultless you may think yourselves. "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." '

Such was 'Christ's Apology for loving sinners,' as Dr. Bruce has called it. Such His reproof of the cold pharisaic temper which is never happier than when tearing to pieces the character of a fellow-mortal. May God grant that you and I shall never fall into it. May we try to believe that, however men may differ from us and however far they seem from purity, yet they are dear to God and may with love be brought nigh to Him.

In closing this story of Matthew's conversion, I cannot forbear from pointing out to you how grandly Christ made up to the Publican for the sacrifice he made. When Matthew rose up from his tax-office that morning, he well knew he was making a big sacrifice. It was the sacrifice of his subsistence, his very all. But see how Christ made it up to him, even from a worldly point of view.

What would Matthew have been if he had remained that day in his counting house and said, 'Lord, I cannot follow Thee now. Suffer me first to make a little more money.' He would have remained unknown, or known only like that rich young man who made the great refusal and went sorrowful away.

Where is Capernaum or its custom-house to-day? Gone for ever! You cannot even trace its ruins on the deserted shore of Galilee's lake. But out from the midst of its dust there rises one monument which time can never efface; it is, as I have said, that Gospel, the first and as some think the greatest of the four, which was written by Matthew, once a publican, now an Apostle. Yes, as Dr. Whyte has said, Matthew did not leave all in the custom-house. He took one thing. He took his pen.

Think not that in following Jesus you are narrowing your life; as well might the streamlet think it is narrowing its waters when it pours them into the Amazon or Mississippi. Think not that in accepting Christ you are entering on a gloomy service that will make of all your life a doleful dirge; as well might Matthew's publican friends pity him when they sat at his feast and saw the smile that lit up his face whenever he looked on the face of Jesus.

In following Jesus, Matthew received even here a hundredfold; but in the life to come—who shall tell his story?

IX

THE PESSIMIST

'Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails . . . I will not believe.'—ST. JOHN xx. 25.

IT was an unfortunate thing for Thomas that of all the disciples who assembled together on that first Easter Sunday evening in the Upper Room, the only absentee should have been he. Had it been another, had it been John the Beloved, or Peter the Intrepid, or Simon the Zealot, it would not have mattered so much. For these men would have been more open to receive the message of faith than their doubting fellow-disciple, and if they had hesitated still to believe it would have been with an interrogation which leaned to the 'sunnier side of doubt.'

But with Thomas it was not so. For Thomas was one of these men who are always prone to believe the worst; not because they like the worst, but because it seems more honest to do so. ‘Oh yes,’ I can hear him say, ‘of course I knew you would get up some tale to corroborate the silly story of that emotional Mary Magdalene. You have all been led astray by her, and your hearts have created the vision which you want to believe. But I tell you it will not gull me. Except I see in his hands the print of the nails . . . I will not believe.’

And so all that week he went on hugging to his heart his gloomy thoughts, refusing to enter into the joy which the others experienced, and had it not been for the considerateness of Christ, he would have sunk into a slough of hopeless despondency, and there would have been two apostates at least in the disciple band.

I say it was most unfortunate for Thomas; but how fortunate for us! As one of the early Fathers has said, ‘Thomas doubted that we might have no doubt.’ For of course the doubt of Thomas is just the thing that modern scepticism is saying to-day. In the 'Vision Theory of the Resurrection,' it is saying, 'We do not accuse the disciples of being deceivers, as the early Rationalists did. We know them to be the truest of the true. No, they were not body-snatchers, but they were visionaries, led astray by the delusion of a highly emotional woman.' 'We owe the Resurrection,' says Renan, 'to Mary Magdalene.'

But that was just what Thomas said nineteen hundred years ago; and the fact that the scepticism of this obstinate and confirmed unbeliever was overthrown is one of the most convincing evidences that we can have to-day of the reality of that which overthrew it. 'Thomas doubted that you and I might have no reason to doubt.'

For notice how Jesus treated this doubt of Thomas. He did not deal with it as He might well have dealt with it, as He dealt with Herod when he questioned Him about many things and He answered 'to never a word.' He did not deal with it, even, as He dealt with John the Baptist's doubt, when He simply pointed to His works as the proof of His Messiahship and said, 'Blessed is he who shall not be offended in me.' No, He shows no resentment with Thomas for his doubt. He does not leave him in a cold silence to himself. On the contrary, there is the most tender sympathy and consideration for his condition. 'Reach hither thy finger,' He says, 'and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.'

Why is this? Partly, doubtless, for Thomas's sake. Jesus was not angry with him, as the Church has so often been with doubters. He does not lay him on the rack, or burn him at the stake. No, He realises how much there is good and noble behind that doubt of His loving disciple; how much Thomas would have longed to believe could he only have done so. He recognises with the poet that there often lives 'more faith in honest doubt than in half the creeds'; and that if He can only win this passionate sceptic back to faith, He will build out of him one of the noblest champions of the truth. And so He did. Hear the noble confession which bursts from Thomas at the close, 'My Lord and my God.' No grander declaration of faith was ever given in the New Testament. It is a lesson to us all. Let us not turn away from the doubter, as we too often do, as if he were a moral leper; but let us come to him with the sympathy Christ expresses when He says, 'Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, . . . and be not faithless, but believing.'

But it was also for the Church's sake, for your sake and mine, that Jesus dealt so patiently and so adequately with this doubt of Thomas. It is true, indeed, you and I cannot have the ocular demonstration of Thomas here and now; still in one respect his experience is of great evidential value to us. It shows us that the Jesus in whose Resurrection the early disciples believed was not a spectre of the imagination, but a real body that could be 'handled' as well as seen. If Jesus did not rise from the grave, or if He only rose 'spiritually,' the early believers must not only have been dupes of their own fancies, they must have been, in some cases at least, knaves and body-snatchers as well.

Is such a thing possible? Can we believe that 'the glorious company of the Apostles' contained men like that? Can we suppose that their followers, that Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus and Joseph of Arimathea, were people like that? Can you believe that the faith on which they built their glorious Church was a lie? Surely such a supposition is incredible. Its result would be to make one disbelieve in a God in history at all. It is either Christ or Atheism.

Turning now from this story, let us close our study of the doubting disciple by seeking to gather up the lessons which he leaves with us.

(1) *The first is the danger of the gloomy temper in character and faith.*

No one can study the character of Thomas, as it is so strikingly revealed in the few touches given of it by John, without seeing that what lay at the root of his doubt was not intellect but temperament. He has been called Thomas the Doubter, but, as has been well said by Mr. Greenhough,[1] he should rather be called 'Thomas the Pessimist.' 'If to say man,' says Dr. Whyte, 'is to say melancholy, then to say Thomas is to say religious melancholy.'

You see this coming out in the other two incidents in which he is mentioned in the Gospel. You see it in the Upper Room, when Jesus tries to console his disciples, broken-hearted by the announcement of His death, with the promise of Immortality. 'I go to prepare a place for you, and whither I go ye know and the way ye know.'

Then Thomas breaks in. 'Lord, we

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[1] *The Apostles of Our Lord.*

know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?' The future is all dark to him. He would willingly believe in Immortality if he could. He is no Sadducee rejoicing in a future of annihilation. He wants to believe, but the facts are all against it. 'Lord, we know not whither thou goest.'

The other incident is still more striking. It is in the story of Lazarus, where Jesus tells His disciples that He is going back to Jerusalem—to see his friend and 'awake him out of sleep.' The announcement met with considerable displeasure on the part of the disciples. 'Lord, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?' There would seem to have been a kind of mutiny or break-away when, in spite of all their remonstrances, Jesus persists in His resolve; until Thomas bursts in with the noble words, 'Let us also go with him, that we may die with him'! That sweeps all opposition before it, as the call to sacrifice so often does. But it marks off Thomas to the life. He expects no good to come from his following of Jesus. He can see a Cross at the end of it as clearly as the Master. Nevertheless he will be loyal to the end. 'Let us go with him, that we may die with him.'

'Thomas,' as Godet says, 'was a man of much love but little faith.' He was, as Dr. Jones says,[1] like Mr. Fearing in Bunyan's allegory, 'a man of a very choice spirit; only he was always kept very low, and that made his life so burdensome to himself and others.'

Such people there are in every age. I remember one in my first charge. He too was a man of a most choice spirit, but he had conceived the terrible idea that God had predestined him to everlasting misery. 'He is of one mind,' he used to say to me dolefully, quoting from Job, 'who can turn Him?' There were happy spells of sunshine when he used to get out of his sadness and enjoy the assurance of a God of love; but too often his attitude was one of profound depression, worse even than that of Thomas when he said, ‘Let us go with him, that we may die with him.’

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[1] *The Glorious Company of the Apostles.*

And we remember, too, Cowper and his tragic last poem as he sank into the profound depression in which he died :—

‘No voice divine the storm allayed,
   No light propitious shone,
When snatched from all effectual aid
   We perished each alone ;
But *I* beneath a rougher sea
And ’whelmed in deeper gulfs than he.’

Temperament is a mighty power ; but it is not all-powerful. Many of the noblest minds have been handicapped by it: Dante and Milton and Pascal and Beethoven and Dürer and Swift and Carlyle. But though prone to melancholy, these men did not, with one or two exceptions, allow their melancholy to master them. ‘They beat their music fuller out,’ and in the end it was all the richer because of its undertones of sadness.

(2) And that leads us, in the second

place, to consider *the cure for the melancholy temperament* suggested by this incident.

'Thomas was not with them when Jesus came,' says the Evangelist, and there can be no doubt that his melancholy, which was doubtless the chief reason for his absence from the meeting, received no little aggravation from it. Had he been there he would have been saved from that week of obstinate unbelief which so prolonged his misery and caused no little uneasiness to the other disciples. For doubt is infectious, and when the doubter went about saying to all the disciples he met, 'Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, I will not believe,' it would no doubt have a depressing effect on the rest.

It was good, therefore, for himself and the others that he did not persist in his non-churchgoing attitude but returned to his place in the Upper Room on the Sunday following. For there, as we have seen, the Lord graciously appeared once more to turn his sadness into singing, the shadow of death into the morning.

Social activity of all kinds is, I believe, a good alleviation of the melancholy spirit. Anything that takes one out of oneself is to be advised to brooding souls. But one of the best, if not the best of all, is Social Worship. 'Is any afflicted, let him pray,' says the Apostle. There is always hope of a doubter so long as he goes to church. It is because so many of your modern Thomases have refused to believe in this old cure that the result of their malady is so often unsatisfactory. 'If Lady Macbeth were living to-day,' says a modern critic, 'she would be ordered off to Marienbad.' Possibly, but would she find a permanent cure there?

It may be asked, Did Thomas gain a permanent cure for his melancholy spirit that night in the Upper Room? The answer to this question cannot fully be given, inasmuch as his name from this time disappears from the sacred record except for the inclusion of it in the Upper

Room at Pentecost. We may be sure, however, from its presence in that record, that Thomas never went back on his noble testimony of faith, ‘My Lord and my God.’ It is likely enough that he would have his days of gloom in his future life. Temperaments do not change, and Mr. Fearing goes on fearing till near the end.

But then Thomas had the blessed assurance of a great experience in the past, by which he was always able to rebuke his fears for the future and say, ‘What time I am afraid I will trust in thee.’ ‘Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.’

On the Ochil Mountains in Scotland there stands a rude monolith which in the distance looks like a Druid stone, but is now at least a Christian monument. On it is carved the word ‘Ebenezer,’ and beneath it we read, ‘The name of this place is light, for here out of darkness light shone forth. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that walketh in darkness and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God.'

Here, near a century ago, a stranger came in great darkness. Educated for the ministry, he had lost faith in God and could not go on; till one day on that lone hillside the light broke in and he set up this 'Ebenezer' to testify to his discovery. He was a melancholy man and was often tempted again to fall into despondency, but whenever he did so went back to this great memory and therein found peace and hope.

Blessed are they who have such shining spots in their memory. Blessed still more are those who refuse to forget them.

X

NAMES AND LITTLE MORE

'James the son of Alphæus, and Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus.'—St. Matthew x. 3.

Sometimes in going through a great cathedral in which lie buried a nation's illustrious dead, you may have come on a monument inscribed with a name once famous but now forgotten. You read there in glowing epitaph the expression of a generation's regard and a family's affection; yet to you it is now nothing but a name. The man whom it commemorates was evidently once useful and beloved, but now—what is he?

'His memory and his name are gone,
Alike unknowing and unknown.'

So, in passing through the Valhalla of 'the glorious company of the Apostles,' amongst the men whose names and deeds still move the world, we come to these two disciples whose lives and characters are only a matter of conjecture—'James the son of Alphæus, and Lebbæus whose surname was Thaddæus.'

But let us not pass them by on that account! Rather let us bend in reverence over their neglected stones. Perhaps they may suggest thoughts as helpful as those of their more illustrious brethren. The poet says he found 'sermons in stones.' Perhaps we may not be misguided if we seek a sermon in these headstones of *The Obscure Apostles*.

I. And let us take the second first, since he is not quite so unknown as the other.

Lebbæus, called Thaddæus, has another name in Luke's Gospel. He is called Judas, the son of James. It is rather curious that Lebbæus should thus have three names. Perhaps he changed the last one to get rid of its evil associations. At all events, there seems no doubt about the identification; for he is named Judas by John as well as Luke, only there the designation is made more explicit by the addition—'*not Iscariot.*'

Now it so happens that John, to whom we owe so much of our knowledge of these lesser Apostles, does record *one remark* of this Judas Lebbæus. It is a question put by him to Jesus at the Supper table. The Master had been telling them of the Holy Spirit the Comforter, who was to come and reveal Himself to them after He had gone, so that they would know Jesus after death better than they had done in life; know Him as the world could never know Him.

Then it is that Judas breaks in with the not unnatural question, 'Lord, how can that be? How can you show yourself to us and yet remain invisible to the world?' 'Then said Judas *not Iscariot,* Master, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?'

The question does not disclose a very great mind, though it received a great answer; but it is interesting because of the way Judas is introduced, 'Judas *not Iscariot*!' So this disciple is described merely by a negative! He has not merely an obscure name: he has also a bad name.

It was not always so. When Judas had been 'christened' as a babe, there had been no name more illustrious. It was the name of the Chosen Tribe. It was the name of the great Maccabæus, the last hero of Jewish history and in some respects the noblest.

But in Christian story these bright associations had been blackened by the blackest deed of history. It had been made a name of infamy. Had this Judas indeed been a man of extraordinary personality, he might have lived down his sinister name; but he could not do so, and thus he comes before us with only a negative description, as 'Judas *not* Iscariot'!

A negative compliment, and yet a real one. I can well believe that in Gentile circles, where the great name of Judah was not known, this ill-omened name might have been a real hindrance to Judas. But if so he lived it down, bursting ‘his life’s invidious bar,’ and making his name to be remembered as one of fidelity and not of treachery. ‘Judas *not* Iscariot.’

There are not a few like him who are thus burdened with a bad name. A father’s crime or a mother’s shame may be held up against them, and the children are made to suffer for the sins of their parents. Worse still, a man may stain his own good name. There are few more difficult tasks than thus to live down a bad name, yet Judas reminds us that it can be done.

In *A Gentleman in Prison*, which Miss Caroline Macdonald has introduced to English readers, there is told the story of a Japanese criminal who by a life of crime of every description earned the name of being the most abandoned villain in Japan. Yet in the gaol at Tokyo, where he lay sentenced to death for the cruel murder of a Geisha girl, done under the most brutal circumstances, this wretched man found God. Lying there for two years while his protracted trials went on, he manifested such a wondrous change of heart that many came to see him, to marvel at the transformation of a beast, as he called himself, into one of God's gentlemen. On the scaffold, ere his life, as the Buddhist chaplain says, 'dropped like a dewdrop from time into eternity,' he quoted words composed by himself in a hymn which he had written in the cell, descriptive of his strange experience :—

'My name is defiled,
My body dies in prison ;
But my soul purified,
This day returns to the city of God.'

He had proved the truth of the promise, 'To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name.'

II. Let us now pass to the first of these obscure Apostles, JAMES THE SON OF ALPHÆUS.

Who this James was is entirely a matter of conjecture. Tradition, however, has been busy in his case in filling up the blank, and volumes of discussion have been written about him.

He has been identified with James 'the Lord's brother,' who takes such a prominent place in the Council of Jerusalem, and to whom Paul makes one or two references. He is further credited with writing the little homily which is known as 'the general Epistle of James.'

This identification was first promulgated by St. Jerome in the year 382 A.D. He did so largely in the interests of the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary, the mother of our Lord, which was then taking rapid hold of the Church. Jerome suggests that 'the brethren of the Lord' were his cousins, a use of the word which he tries to show was not unknown in ancient Greek. Their father was Alphæus, and James was thus a full cousin of Jesus Christ, his mother and Mary being sisters. Thus, instead of being the obscurest of the Apostles, James would become one of its greatest, one of the 'Pillar Apostles.'

It is a pretty theory, and one would like to believe it if only for the sake of James. But the facts are all against it. As for the 'Epistle of James,' it seems difficult to believe that a simple Galilean who left all to follow Jesus should write this brilliant polemic against an unmoralised Christianity, in which there is hardly an undoubted reference to Christ at all, none to His Messiahship, none to His Resurrection, none even to His Cross. If James the son of Alphæus is James 'the brother of the Lord,' then the 'Epistle of James' could hardly have come from his hand.

Setting that aside, however, the theory rests on the assumption that in Greek the word 'brother' can be used for 'cousin.' The best authorities, like Bishop Lightfoot and Mr. Mayor, deny this. Brother is often used 'affectionately' of cousins, as it is used affectionately of all men;

but there is no proof whatever that a man could be called a brother of another when he was only his cousin.

Furthermore, we are told that 'his brethren did not believe in him.' How could that be said if James the son of Alphæus was amongst these 'brethren'? Moreover, we learn from another passage that the mother of James the son of Alphæus was called Mary, and we should thus have two Mary's, sisters in one family; which, as the mathematicians say, is 'absurd.'

Besides all that, there is the total absence of any reference to this theory in the New Testament or early tradition. If James the son of Alphæus had been the great man he was, we cannot help feeling it would have been mentioned, and he would have had a higher place in the Apostolic list, and been marked out in some other way than as 'James the less.'

What, then, do we know about this James the less? The answer is, 'Nothing';

except that he had a good mother, for Mark tells us that among the watchers by the Cross there were present ‘ Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses and Salome.’

From another passage we learn that Matthew the Publican was also a son of this same Alphæus, so that this Mary the wife of Alphæus must have been a mother of *two* of the Apostles. What high honour had she! And when we read that she was amongst the holy women who watched the Cross and came to the sepulchre, it is impossible to resist the belief that it was largely due to her that these lads were amongst the disciples of Jesus. When we remember that Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee, was also one of the holy women of the sepulchre, we see how much motherhood did for Jesus.

There is a cry in some quarters that the Church needs more ministers and that there is a dearth of men of real ability coming forward to its service. Salome and ‘ the other Mary ’ teach us that much of this shortage can be made up by good mothers. If you will only consecrate some of your children from the cradle to the service of the Highest, as Hannah did, there would be no lack of the sons of Alphæus and Zebedee in the ministry. Beyond this reference to James's mother, we know absolutely nothing certain about this Apostle. He never speaks a single word, never does a single deed either in the Gospels or the Acts. He lived as he died, unknown.

Unknown, and yet one thing is known. He was faithful unto death. 'Of them thou gavest me,' said Jesus, 'have I lost none.' Where he lived and how he died; what he achieved for Christ, whether he worked as a missionary abroad or as a preacher at home, these things shall never be known till the sea gives up her dead. But one thing we do know. He kept true till death. 'Of them whom thou gavest me have I lost none.'

Is there not something beautiful in that? something suggestive in the thought of this modest worker doing his bit to the end, without one single word of recognition in the New Testament? For is he not in that very lack of recognition a worthy type of the world's workers in all ages? Yes, if Peter be the Patron Saint of the Preachers, and John the Patron Saint of the Mystics, and Paul the Patron Saint of the Theologians, and Andrew the Patron Saint of Christian Workers, then James the less has the largest constituency of all—he is the *Patron Saint of the Unrecognised.*

I have already said that a cemetery often suggests to us the transitoriness of human glory; but the poet Gray reminds us that among these dead there may be some who might have been remembered had they only had a chance to develop their powers.

'Perhaps,' he says in his famous elegy,

'Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of Empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre;

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill penury repressed their noble rage
And froze the genial current of the soul.'

It is at least true that every assemblage of human dust contains the names of those who, had opportunity offered, would have risen to higher achievements than their narrow sphere permitted.

Now James the son of Alphæus, and Judas the son of James, are the patron saints of such men. They teach us that there is something better than the recognition of men; there is the approval of one's own conscience, and there is better, the 'Well done' of God.

'As unknown,' says St. Paul, 'and yet well known': yes, unrecognised by men, by Church or State, but known to God; well known to Him who seeth not as man seeth and shall one day reward the secret worker openly. I remember seeing a fine picture by an Italian artist, entitled 'The Passing of the Obscure.' It represents the great mixed multitude—life's common herd—as they are driven remorselessly forward by the hand of death into the dark flood of the future world in which they are to perish for ever. You can see them as they drift upward to the shore of eternity. The old, the middle-aged, the young—the latter a great company—are there. They have all one expression on their faces—disappointment. Life has been so unsatisfactory. They had hoped to do great things, and now it is ended and they have nothing to show.

'The passing of the obscure'—yes, it is a touching thought; and yet, as I looked into the picture, I felt that if the artist had been Christian in his art, he would have given a different horizon to his canvas. Instead of that grey sea of annihilation ending in a darkening sky, he would have edged a distant gleam of light into the horizon, and that light would have spread a pathway of gold across the dark waters and lit up at least some of the faces there with hope.

So was it with James and Judas.

Unknown in time, they are not unknown in eternity. They are well known there, and he who in rapt vision saw the twelve foundations of the Heavenly Jerusalem saw inscribed upon them the names of *twelve* Apostles of the Lamb. James the less was there as well as James the greater. Lebbæus who is called Thaddæus was there as well as Simon who is called Peter.

Is not that a lesson from these humble headstones as fitting to you and me as any we have gathered from their more illustrious brethren? There are not many of us whose names will be anything more than theirs; nay, they will be much less; but if, like them, we too are faithful, faithful unto death, we too shall receive the crown they won, 'as unknown and yet well known.'

XI

THE ENTHUSIAST

'Simon called Zelotes.'—St. Luke vi. 15.

'Among the many surprising things connected with Christ,' says Prof. A. B. Davidson, 'this at first sight seems as surprising as any, the men of such different characters that He gathered about Him. A modern teacher collects around him men of like turn and tastes with himself. If he is a man of intellect, it is men of intellect that gather round him. If he is a man of feeling, it is the tender-hearted and the tearful who crowd to him to enjoy what in time becomes a luxury, the exhibition of human woes and broken hearts. But Christ gathered about Him men of every class, alike the tender and the strong, alike the credulous and the severe.'

Of this catholicity one of the most notable examples is the Apostle whose character we have now to describe. As to the description of it we have not much help from the Gospels; for this is the only thing that is said about Simon in the whole New Testament. From that point of view he is more unknown than James the son of Alphæus, or Judas the son of James, whom we were considering in the previous lecture. But there are some descriptions which are illuminative even though they consist but of one single word. And the description of Simon is one of them. He is called 'the zealot.' The epithet casts a flood of light on his whole character and life, and as skilled antiquarians are able to make up almost the whole of an ancient inscription from one or two words on a broken piece of stone, so this one word 'Zelotes' is at once an inscription and a description.

For the name 'Zealot' is not merely the title of a party: *it is the clue to a character*. The Zealots were a band of patriots who, some twenty years before this, had risen against the Roman yoke under Judas of Gamala. Crushed with terrible atrocities, they remained in a state of slumbering animation until the siege of Jerusalem, when they rose to power again; and it was largely due to them that it ended in the national ruin of the Jewish people.

How strange that such a man should have enrolled himself as a follower of the gentle Jesus! No two men could have seemed more opposite in character and ideals. One aimed at restoring an earthly kingdom: the other looked forward to a Kingdom that was not of this world. One relied on the sword and the dagger: the other on the gentle but omnipotent force of truth.

It shows us for one thing the universality of Christ. He has an appeal to every kind of soul. Most great men are one-sided. It is because they have only one side that they are so great. But Christ was great on every side, and therefore every kind of soul drew to Him. What He said would be true of Him after He was lifted up was felt before—‘He drew all men to him.’

And it shows, further, Christ’s disregard of prudential considerations. Simon was not a safe man to make a disciple, if Jesus wanted to keep right with Rome. But what did Jesus care for prudence? Small men are great in prudence, but Prophets think of greater things. Simon the Zealot was not a prudent man to choose for a disciple; but there were three reasons that far outbalanced prudence in Christ’s eyes when He chose him to be His.

I. *First, the choice of Simon was a symbol of that great Gospel of Reconciliation He came to preach.*

There was another unpopular man besides Simon in the Apostolic band, Matthew the tax-gatherer. Now when we think of these two men, so opposite in their very unpopularities, standing asunder at the very poles of thought, we begin to see why Christ selected them both to be His Apostles. He did so just because they were opposed. Extremes were to meet in that little circle of the Twelve. He had come as the great reconciler; first, of man to God by the blood of His cross, then, and as a result of that, of man to man; breaking down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile; declaring that in Himself all petty distinction of nationality and all social barriers were to be obliterated. For in Him 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female.'

It was this Gospel of Reconciliation Christ proclaimed when He made the ex-zealot and the ex-publican sit down together at the same table. How much these men had hated each other in the past! Simon had spat on the ground when Matthew passed him in the streets of Capernaum. But the love of Christ melted their antagonisms, and the world was made to see the first gleams of that glorious day when 'Man to man the world o'er' would 'brithers be for a' that.'

II. *In the second place, I think Christ selected Simon because He wanted to show that a purified Patriotism has a true place in His Church.*

It is sometimes said that patriotism is not a Christian virtue, and that the Christian should be a citizen of the world. 'Patriotism,' says Bernard Shaw, 'is an invention by which those who are humanely disposed are persuaded to become the most destructive of all destroyers.' Certainly, when we think of the terrible results which have followed a misguided patriotism in the last few years, we are tempted to feel that there is something dangerous in the very word, and that Dr. Johnson was not far wrong when he said that patriotism was often 'the last refuge of a scoundrel.'

But then we have got to remember that there is a true as well as a false patriotism. The false patriotism is that which is represented by Simon in his pre-Christian days. That is the patriotism which was represented in Germany before the war in its

Deutschland über alles type of thought; and it is one which is not unknown in our own land, as the Rectorial Address of the Earl of Birkenhead to the students of Glasgow the other year proves. It is indeed a terrible curse to the earth, feeding the fires of national and racial hatred, and drenching the world with more blood and tears than perhaps any other word in the Devil's vocabulary.

But though there is a false patriotism, there is a true one as well. That there is, we need only turn to the Master Himself as He weeps over a doomed Jerusalem, and cries, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee!' And what is the difference between the two? I answer, the true patriotism is that which seeks to make a nation great by righteousness; the false patriotism is that which seeks to make it great by force. The kingdom Christ came to introduce was a kingdom of Character—a kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Had the Jewish nation listened to that message it would never have come to destruction. And it is the same to-day. Christianity is the true patriotism because it is the preaching of that righteousness which exalteth a nation, of that meekness which inheriteth the earth.

Understood in this sense Christ was a true patriot and an ardent one, and it was because He loved patriots that He included Simon in His band. He saw that as a man could never do good to the State without first doing good to his family, so he could never do good to the world except by first doing good to his own country. The 'international' who uses his internationalism to spit on his own flag is either a fanatic or a scoundrel: probably both.

Christ loved the patriotism of Simon, but He purified and illumined it. Tradition says that before the siege of Jerusalem, Simon, remembering the warnings of the Saviour, led the Jewish Christians to Pella, beyond Jordan, and thus saved them from the awful massacres of Titus. However that may be, we have no doubt that under the teaching of Jesus, Simon's zealotry became refined and purified into that noble enthusiasm which burns in Paul's passionate longing for a Christianised Judaism: 'Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be *saved.*' 'For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.'

III. And that leads me to the third and perhaps the most important reason Jesus had for appointing Simon the Zealot to be an Apostle. *He chose him because he was—as his name implies—a man of enthusiasm.*

With all their faults the Zealots had at least one transcendent virtue—they were enthusiasts. They were ready to risk all for God and country. Now Jesus loved men like that. It was said by a prophet of Him, 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.' So zealous was He in His work that often He had no time even to eat, and His mother and brethren once wanted to take Him home because they thought He was going 'off His head.' They said, 'He is beside himself.'

But it was Jesus who was then the sane man, not His brethren. For enthusiasm is the one thing in propaganda without which you can make no progress. History is written by enthusiasts. The mountain-peaks of time are all volcanoes. They were all raised by a hidden fire once burning within them.

Only zeal must be informed by knowledge, else it will be a curse not a blessing. 'It is good to be zealously affected—*but always in a good thing.*' Simon and his comrades had zeal; but it was a zeal without knowledge, and therefore it degenerated into fanaticism. Zeal without knowledge is fanaticism, just as zeal with knowledge is enthusiasm; and that, as the word means, is the breath of God.

What the Church needs most to-day is

zeal. We have enthusiasms about many things. We have great enthusiasm for sport; and why not? I like a man even in his games to put his whole heart into it.

We have enthusiasm too for business. I have been in the Corn Exchange of Chicago when there was a panic on, and it was one of the wildest scenes I have ever witnessed. Well, even there, why not? Paul says, 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit'—if only, in all, you are 'serving the Lord.' If a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well.

But why is there not more enthusiasm for God? Why are so many churches, as John Watson once said, mere aquariums, 'collections of cold-blooded animals'? Oh! for the zeal of Peter and John, when they said, 'Whether it be right in the sight of God, to obey men rather than God, judge ye.' Oh! for the zeal of Paul when he cried, 'I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.' Oh! for the enthusiasm of the martyrs and the Covenanters, when their blood dyed the heather and their flesh rose in triumphant flame to God rather than be false to Christ. Oh! for the fiery energy of a Wesley, a Whitfield, a Spurgeon, a Booth, a Moody, when the zeal for souls ate them up, and they went forward through life with one flaming fire in their breasts—'Christ, and him crucified.'

Brethren, when I think of these men I am ashamed. Why is it that I am so cold, so dead? What is it gave these men the sacred fire that made them, like Simon, Christian zealots?

Well, in the first place, I would say, *a profound sense of sin and a vivid realisation of the death to which it leads* is a powerful influence in making a man an enthusiast for Christ. It is told of Rowland Hill, the great but eccentric London preacher, that shortly after he had gained the ear of the people, he was asked to preach in the little town where he had been brought up. He finished a great appeal by telling a story of how he had once been the means of saving two men's lives. They had been engulfed by the falling in of a gravel pit. Rowland saw it and rushed at top speed into the town shouting at the pitch of his voice, 'Two men lost in the gravel pit! Come and save them!' He soon gathered a band of helpers, and the men were disentombed. A man said to him, 'Rowland, you have a grand voice! you saved two lives by it to-day.' 'And now,' he closed, 'I am called mad because I cry, "Lost! lost in the pit of eternal destruction!" Will you not come to Jesus now and be saved by Him.' It was the vision of sin, 'the wrath of God revealed against all unrighteousness of men,' that made Rowland Hill such an enthusiast for salvation, and not until the pulpit relearn the meaning of that word, 'Lost! the wages of sin is death,' will it become a living force in the salvation of souls.

But deeper and more central even than the vision of sin is the *vision of the*

Saviour from sin. What changed Simon the Zealot from being a fanatical bigot into an enthusiast for souls was the vision of Christ. That wonderful personality captured his soul, and changed the destructive Nihilist into a constructive Evangelist. And so still, the love of Christ is the great kindler of enthusiasm in the heart of those who come under His influence. 'The love of Christ constraineth me,' cries that great zealot St. Paul. 'We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: *we beseech you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.'

The vision of sin and the vision of Christ, these are the two great factors of Christian enthusiasm. But how, you may ask, shall I get these? I answer in one word, *Prayer*; prayer for the Holy Spirit that He may illumine your mind, and then pour into it that golden oil of perseverance which never lets the fires of life and love go down, and keeps ever fresh and keen before it the needs of a fallen world and the power of a Saviour's love.

In the diary of a noble minister of Christ, who carried on for forty years a ministry of untiring zeal in the East End of a great city, these words constantly occur in his entry on a Saturday night: 'Lord, let there be no falling off to-morrow, let there be no falling off.' Little wonder that he kept to the end his ministry unimpaired, and left a name fragrant for years amongst his people.

'Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.'

XII

THE MAN WHOM JESUS COULD NOT MAKE

'Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.'—St. John xvii. 12.

In the strange and varied picture gallery of the Bible, there is no portrait which has so dark and tragic significance as that of Judas Iscariot. Whether we consider the privileges he abused,

> 'The base Judean, who flung a pearl away
> Richer than all his tribe,'

or the inconceivably callous way in which he did the deed, with a kiss, or last of all think of the tragic end to which his apostasy led him, we must feel that there is a mystery of horror about this character which makes him not only unique in the Bible but also in history.

Dante has expressed the crude realism

of the Middle Ages by placing him in the lowest hell, writhing in the jaws of Satan; but Christ pronounces a doom upon him of far greater reserve but of deeper solemnity when He says, 'Good were it for that man if he had never been born.'

From our point of view, however, he comes before us as 'the man whom Jesus could *not* make.' 'Of them whom thou gavest me,' said Jesus to His heavenly Father, 'have I lost none but the son of perdition.' One alone was there in that band, but still one, on whom the love of Christ could make no effective impression. All the others He made, and often the materials He had to deal with were very poor; but there was one He made a tragic failure with; and so I read that in the list of the disciples there was not only a John and a Peter and a Thomas; but also a 'Judas Iscariot, who *also* betrayed him.'

It teaches us, does it not, that we must not be surprised if sometimes our best efforts will fail to awaken any response? Even Jesus, even the noblest love that was ever shown to man, failed sometimes. 'Judas betrayed the Son of Man with a kiss.'

This, however, is an age of criticism, and one of the forms that criticism takes is that of attempting to rehabilitate lost reputations. It is, I fear, rather a love for novelty than truth that is usually at the bottom of these 'studies in whitewash.' At all events, we have witnessed in our day such strange examples of it as apologies for Henry VIII. and the Borgias. Now in this spirit there has been attempted a rehabilitation of the character of the traitor. He has been held up as no traitor, but as a mistaken patriot who, believing in his Master's miraculous powers, resolved to force His hand and compel Him to declare Himself the Messiah and Emancipator of the Jewish nation. The origin of this ingenious theory, like so many novelties in theology, is to be found in Germany; but its most eloquent exponent in English is Thomas De Quincey, whose essay on Judas Iscariot is one of the masterpieces of English prose.

According to De Quincey, Judas saw that Jesus was letting His great opportunity slip, and, believing profoundly in His supernatural powers, he resolved to get Him arrested in order that He might be compelled to stand forth as a new and greater Maccabæus; discomfiting Rome and its powers, and setting up a new 'Kingdom of God.' Hence the paltry sum Judas took for playing the traitor. Hence the friendly kiss which to us seems so foul. Hence, above all, the tragedy that followed when the plan miscarried. Had he not been a true lover of Jesus, he would never have hanged himself when he saw that his Master was to die.

There is something, you see, that is plausible in the theory, and perhaps even a little that is true in it; but as a whole it must be unhesitatingly rejected, and that for the simple reason that the Bible knows nothing of it, and above all, Jesus Himself rejects it.

Had there been any patriotic motive in Judas's action, we may be sure that Christ would have given him credit for it. He knew what was in man, and yet He saw nothing but baseness in the deed of Judas. 'Have I not chosen you twelve,' He once said, 'and yet one of you is a devil'; and again, 'The Son of Man indeed goeth as it is written of him; but woe unto that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed. *Good were it for that man if he had never been born.*'

That surely is not the language Jesus would have used of a mistaken patriot. And the infinite sorrow, too, with which Jesus spoke of the act—'Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me'—indicates that the Master must have been strangely mistaken in Judas if he was anything else than a traitor, and that of the deepest dye.

When, however, the exponents of this theory put their finger on the paltry bribe, and still more the anguish of remorse that followed his awakening, they do suggest questions that make his character a psychological puzzle; and perhaps the best way I can treat this subject is to begin by giving you what I think were the motives that led Judas gradually on to his terrible end, as these are outlined for us in the Gospels.

To begin with, then, Judas is represented by the Evangelists, but especially by John, as *an essentially avaricious man.* 'He was a thief,' says John, 'and had the bag and bare what was put therein.' No doubt, when the call of the Master first came to him, this innate passion was overmastered by a genuine enthusiasm for the Galilean prophet. Like the others, indeed, he may have thought that 'the Kingdom of Heaven' was to be partly material in its character, and that he would be 'great' in it. Still, looking at his final words—'I have betrayed innocent blood'—we cannot but believe that there was in the man, as there is in us all, a nobler part, and that when he first came to Jesus he did so with a true enthusiasm. That this was so I cannot doubt, else Jesus would never have called him to be a disciple. He doubtless saw from the first that there were elements in him which would prove his undoing if not checked. That I take it is what John means when he says, 'Jesus knew from the first who it was should betray him.' These words are not, however, to be understood literally, for, as Dr. Bruce says, 'It is not credible that Iscariot was chosen merely to be a traitor, as an actor might be chosen by a theatre manager to play the part of Iago.' He saw the danger, the great danger, in which Judas lay; but He hoped that by fellowship with Himself the better nature would conquer the worse, that love to Himself would overcome the love of Mammon and make him a single-hearted man.

Unfortunately, there seems to have entered into his breast at this time another evil passion which proved his undoing—

the passion of envy. It has been suggested that from the first he may have felt himself 'an outsider'; because Kerioth, the place from which he came, belongs to Judea; the only town in Palestine known by that name being a village some miles south of Hebron. Judas was therefore the only one in the band who was not a Galilean, and as the Judeans as a whole despised the Galileans, he may have from the first been separated from the rest of the disciples by a local and temperamental antagonism such as often separates Celt and Saxon to-day.

However that may be, we can well believe that from the first he would be envious of the pre-eminence given to Peter, James, and John in the band. With his administrative gifts, he would feel he deserved a place as well as they in the inner circle. Jesus had recognised his abilities by making him the treasurer of the band. He doubtless hoped that by this mark of confidence He would win him closer to Himself. But He shrank from a closer intimacy, and Judas may have resented this. There are men who must be first or nothing. Judas was one of these; and under the favour given to Peter and John, his love for the Master began to cool.

With that loss of his first love, the power of his old passion would return with sevenfold power. And the opportunity for gratifying it was now at his very hand. ‘He had the bag and bare what was put therein.’ He began to keep for himself what he was supposed to have given to the poor. From that hour he was lost. Jesus knew what was in man, and His piercing eye soon penetrated beneath the disguise of sanctity. He did not openly denounce him, because that would have been to deliver him over to Satan; but He must have often looked towards him with solemn appeal as He warned men of the danger of riches; of the impossibility of serving God and Mammon; of the tragedy of gaining the whole world and losing one’s soul.

Alas! these efforts only fed the flame of jealous hatred. He felt he was seen through, and more and more withdrew from the Master's company. Perhaps, too, he began to see that there was little hope of making anything more out of the movement. The ship was sinking: it was time for the rats to leave.

At this moment a new temptation presented itself. He perhaps noticed a proclamation on one of the public places of the Temple offering a reward for the head of Jesus as a heretical blasphemer and a political malcontent. As he read it, avarice joined its forces with envious hatred, and he took the first step in that course which dyed his name with eternal infamy.

The reward which the priests offered must have seemed even to him miserably small—about £5, or equal to £50 of our money; but to a poor man it was always something; and, in any case, it was not so much money he now wanted as revenge upon the Man who had seen through him and despised him. Besides, when he had committed himself, he could hardly go back upon his offer. He had no alternative but to accept the paltry bribe.

But how shall we explain the incredible baseness of that kiss? I grant you it is difficult. Perhaps we can understand it better in this way. When any man is going to do an act of abominable treachery or ingratitude to another, to make it easier he usually works himself into a passion against him. Thus Thackeray tells in *Vanity Fair* how Mr. Osborne turned against his old friend Sedley when the latter came into the Bankruptcy Court. Though Sedley had been the making of him in earlier days, he became now his bitterest foe, excusing his ingratitude by working himself into a furious rage against him and blackening his character all round. So was it now with Judas. He persuaded himself he had a bitter grudge against the Master. He recalled fancied slights he had received, and when Jesus finally dismissed him at the Supper Table, saying, 'That thou doest do quickly,' he went away a demon-possessed man, and determined on the infamous sign which was to seal his act of revenge.

But conscience will not be drowned under the deepest sea of passion. You may think you have killed it, but in the end it will always rise again. And one of the things which very quickly reanimates conscience is to see the object of hatred lying dead before it. Try to think of the man you hate so bitterly to-day as lying dead in his coffin to-night, and how quickly will your hatred evaporate! Now, in the case of Judas there was this to aid the workings of his conscience—the noble spectacle of fortitude and patience that Jesus evinced at His trial. As Judas saw Him standing first before Caiaphas and then before Pilate, as he beheld the noble calm which pervaded the Man he had treated so basely, his conscience began to work. He began to see what he had done. How differently a deed often looks to us after we have done it! 'The moment after' is often one of terrible self-revelation to the passion-possessed sinner. Judas was now feeling the bitterness of that 'moment after.' These feelings were intensified by memories of earlier days, when he had first followed the Master and truly loved Him. How little cause he had to hate Him! How kind Jesus had always been to him, even at that black moment when he had pressed the kiss of treachery on His lips! Jesus had even then called him 'Friend.'

As Judas thought on all this, his heart rose up against him and slew him. He fled to the priests in the hope that even yet some way of undoing his deed might be found. But he soon realised how vain it was to find comfort there. As well might a deer fly to the hounds for protection, or a lost lamb seek refuge with a wolf. It was the last straw upon a burden already intolerable. He fled away to the old disused quarry, and made it then and generations afterwards 'the field of blood.'

Such is in brief outline what I venture to think was the 'Psychology' of the sin of Judas. As we follow it and remember that, as Dr. Denney has said, 'While a theory is always consistent, a character is never completely so,' we must conclude that there is nothing unnatural in the portrait of Judas given in the Gospels. And the disciples themselves corroborate that, for when Jesus announced that one of them should betray Him, their reply was not, 'Impossible! Who can it be?' no, but 'Is it I?'

I. And now, turning from the story, let us seek to gather up the lessons which it teaches us; and first of all we see in it a striking illustration of the truth that *privileges abused become a curse.* If fellowship with Jesus does not *make* a man it will *unmake* him, and more tragically than if such fellowship had never been his.

'This child,' said Simeon, 'is set for the fall and the rising of many in Israel.'

How true that was of Judas! What privileges had been his! For close on three years he had listened to Christ's wonderful words of life; for three years he had witnessed His marvellous deeds.

When Jesus had said to the weary and heavy-laden, 'Come unto me and I will give you rest,' Judas had been with Him then. When He had said to the winds and waves, 'Be still,' Judas had been with Him then. And yet in spite of that he fell, 'fell like a snowflake from heaven to hell.'

Privileges abused become a curse. The fire which melts wax hardens clay. The sunlight which fills the healthy eye with gladness is only a blinding pain to the diseased retina. So Christ is either to us 'a savour of life unto life, or death unto death.'

Which is it going to be with you? Many of you have been children of wondrous privileges. You have had sainted fathers and mothers, who did what they could to lead you to Christ.

You have lived in a land of Sabbaths and of Bibles. Christ has often taught in your streets. What is the result to be? Is it going to make you or to unmake you? Is it going to make you a John or a Judas?

II. In the second place, we see in the end of this story a striking picture of '*the loneliness of sin.*'

The New Testament is nobly reticent about the future of Judas. Peter simply says of him, 'He went unto his own place.' John is a little more explicit. He says, 'The devil entered into him and he went out, and it was night.' 'It was night'—pregnant words! Expressive not only of the natural darkness into which he went from the bright Supper table, but of the deeper darkness of moral blindness which wrapped him round as he went forth to do his black deed.

Dr. John Ker has a fine sermon on that night of loneliness into which Judas entered when he went out to betray the

Master. Founding on the last recorded words of Judas, ‘I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood,’ and the contemptuous answer of the chief priests to them, ‘What is that to us? see thou to that,’ he points out that sin is a principle of loneliness in three ways. First of all, it shuts a man out from God. Second, it cuts him off from his friends, and even at the last his companions in crime. And, third, it makes a man long to fly even from himself, ‘anywhere, everywhere out of the world.’

‘Me miserable! Whither shall I fly?
Each way I fly is hell! Myself am hell!’

I remember once seeing a striking picture of this scene. It shows Judas going up to the chief priests as they are walking along a marble portico of the Temple. Judas is clutching the bag of coins in one hand, his right hand is lifted in entreaty. His face is a transport of agony and rage as he sees them turn away. But the faces of the priests are perhaps more striking still. The chief priest has his chin high in the air as he passes by without even looking at the miserable man. The tool has done its work; let it be broken now. In the distant horizon, two vultures are seen approaching. The carcase is prepared, the eagles are gathering together.

Beware of the divided heart. Beware of the love of money. There are many selling Christ to-day, though they do not do it so openly or infamously as Judas did. The gambler when he fills his pockets with dishonest gains is selling Christ. The business man when he stoops to evil practices is selling Christ. The woman in the streets when she sells her body to the workers of iniquity is selling Christ. There is an eternal Christ in every soul, and when we sell that soul for money we are selling Christ. 'We are crucifying the Son of God afresh.'

In his *Grace Abounding*, Bunyan tells how once the temptation came to him to sell Christ. 'Sell Christ! Sell Christ!' the devil seemed again and again to whisper in his ears, but he rose and fled out of the house, stopping his ears and crying, ‘Sell Christ? No, not for a thousand pounds!’

Be it yours, when the tempter comes to you to sell your soul for a money bribe, to reply with him, ‘Sell Christ? No, not for a thousand pounds!’

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